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Caught in the "nest" : teachers' experiences of layered regulation of quality improvement : a case study of teachers working in five "achieving" public secondary schools in Gauteng.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 1

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS 7

LIST OF TABLES 8

LIST OF FIGURES 8

LIST OF DRAWINGS 8

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY 9

1.1 INTRODUCTION 9

1.2 RATIONALE 10

1.2.1 Transformation and quality improvement measures in South Africa since 1994 10

1.2.1.1 National policies and significant national budget allocation 10

1.2.1.2 The context in which the improvement measures are applied 10

1.2.1.3 The search for an understanding of "quality" education and the means to achieving it 11

1.2.2 Centralised policy constrains teachers and their professionalism 12

1.2.3 Why study teachers at schools that are functioning and achieving quality results? 13

1.2.4 The significance of teachers' perceptions and voice 13

1.2.5 Conclusion 15

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 15

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY 16

1.5 MY RESEARCH JOURNEY 16

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT 18

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW 20

2.1 QUALITY AND ITS OPERATIONALISATION 20

2.1.1 Introduction 20

2.1.2 What is understood by the term "quality" education? 20

2.1.3 Features, descriptors and principles of quality 21

2.1.4 Approaches to quality of four education traditions 24

WiSER

2.1.5 Operationalisation of "quality" 27
2.1.6 The operationalisation of "quality" through school quality improvement reform approaches and the models of accountability that emerge 31
2.1.6.1 Introduction to Table 1 31
2.1.6.2 Table 1 summary and conclusions 32
2.1.7 The operationalisation of quality in key policies, evaluation projects, improvement projects and cross-national tests 39
2.1.7.1 Introduction to Table 2 39
2.1.7.2 Table 2 summary and conclusions 39
2.2 TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM, SCHOOL REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY 45
2.2.1 Conceptions of a profession 46
2.2.2 Traditional conception of teaching as a profession 48
2.2.3 The autonomy versus accountability tension in conceptions of professionalism 50
2.2.4 The dilemma of setting professional standards and its impact on the autonomy versus accountability tension 51
2.2.5 Conceptions of teacher professionalism: the autonomy versus accountability tension emerging from school reform innovations and strategies 53
2.2.5.1 Introduction to Table 3 53
2.2.5.2 Table 3 summary and conclusion 54
2.2.5.3 Teacher resistance 60
2.3 AN EMERGING MODEL OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – A TEACHER-CENTRED MODEL 62
2.3.1 Investment in teachers' knowledge 63
2.3.2 Investment in the teacher as a "total teacher" 64
2.3.3 Re-organisation of teachers' work from isolation to collaboration 65
2.3.4 Mentoring of teachers 67
2.3.5 Securing teachers' commitment to change 68
2.3.6 Align internal and external accountability 69
2.3.7 Conclusion 71
2.4 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY 71
2.5 SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER 72

WitsETD

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 74

3.1 RESTATING THE PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE STUDY 74

3.2 RESEARCH METHODLOGY 74

3.2.1 Research design overview 74

3.2.1.1 Methodological issues 76

3.2.2 Sample selection 77

3.2.2.1 Schools' sample and school background information 78

3.2.2.2 Individual teachers' sample 84

3.2.2.3 Focus group teachers' sample 85

3.3 OPERATIONALISING THE VARIABLES 86

3.3.1 Accessing the data sources 86

3.3.2 Questionnaires 87

3.3.3 Interviews 88

3.3.4 Visual response to a prompt statement 91

3.3.5 Data management, reliability and validity 92

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION 94

3.5 SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER.....102

CHAPTER 4 DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS 103

4.1 THE FRAGILE SELF 103

4.1.1 Fragmented identity 103

4.1.2 Beliefs that "glue" the fragmented identity together 115

4.1.3 Factors that contribute towards the breaking down of teacher identity 120

4.1.4 Conclusion 128

4.2 PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY - THE DELICATE BALANCE 130

4.2.1 Too much freedom, not enough control 132

4.2.1.1 Control is needed to establish order and coherence 132

4.2.1.2 With freedom comes responsibility 133

4.2.1.3 Control is needed to establish a common curriculum 134

4.2.2 Too much control, not enough freedom 136

4.2.2.1 Doing things against one's professional judgment 136

4.2.3 An ideal conception of autonomy 140

WiSETD

CHAPTER 5 TEACHERS' ABILITY TO DELIVER QUALITY EDUCATION 144

5.1 TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT WHAT IS MEANINGFUL AND MEANINGLESS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT 144

5.2 THE IMPACT OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK THAT CONTROLS TEACHERS 146

5.2.1 Factors conceived as meaningful 146
5.2.2 The impact of meaningless factors..... 147
5.2.2.1 Policy idealism..... 147
5.2.2.2 Insecurity..... 148
5.2.2.3 De-skilling..... 149
5.2.2.4 Intensification..... 149
5.2.2.5 Breakdown in the contractual relationship..... 151
5.2.3 Conclusion 153

5.3 THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL FACTORS ON TEACHERS 154

5.3.1 The impact of meaningful factors 154
5.3.1.1 Educational resources 155
5.3.1.2 Learners..... 155
5.3.1.3 School climate..... 157
5.3.1.4 Professional development 158
5.3.2 The impact of meaningless factors..... 159
5.3.2.1 Inadequate school resources..... 159
5.3.2.2 Learners who are educationally unprepared and are unmotivated and ill-disciplined 161
5.3.2.3 Unsupportive teaching culture and uncooperative colleagues..... 163

5.4 OVERALL CONCLUSION.....164

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS..... 166

6.1 INTRODUCTION.....166

6.1.1 The centrality of the teacher..... 166
6.1.2 The "nest of systems" 167

WitsETD

6.2 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS 168

6.2.1 Claim 1 - Teachers thrive on a vibrant professional identity and their conception of quality is mediated by their experiences of professionalism 169

6.2.2 Claim 2 - Internal and external accountability need to be aligned for quality improvement reforms to succeed and be sustainable 175

6.2.3 Claim 3 - Teacher regulation is necessary for quality improvement, but it requires conditions that recognise the value of teacher leadership 184

6.3 WHAT TEACHERS IN "ACHIEVING SCHOOLS" BELIEVE ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN APPROPRIATE MODEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY 188

6.3.1 A teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement 188

6.3.2 Conceptions of professionalism corresponding to a teacher-centred model of accountability 191

6.3.3 How a teacher-centred model of quality improvement differs from other approaches to quality improvement and corresponding accountability modes 192

6.4 CONCLUSION 194

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 195

7.1 IMPLICATIONS 196

7.2 POLICY-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS 196

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 197

REFERENCES 201

APPENDICES 214

APPENDIX 1A Permission letter from the GDE 214

APPENDIX 1B Letter to SGB/ District Director/ Principal 216

APPENDIX 1C Letter to teacher participants in individual/focus group interviews .. 218

APPENDIX 1D Information sheet for research participant 220

APPENDIX 2A School background questionnaire 222

APPENDIX 2B Individual and focus group teachers' questionnaire for written response 224

APPENDIX 2C Semi-structured interview schedule for individual teachers and focus group teachers 226

WitsETD

APPENDIX 3A Mind map of "Beliefs of quality teachers about quality education 229
APPENDIX 3B Diagram re-classifying data from mind maps: "Factors that operate on the INSTITUTIONAL level that enable or constrain delivery of quality education 230

WitsETD

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

C2005	Curriculum 2005
DA	Developmental Appraisal
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DIP	District Improvement Plan
DoE	Department of Education (National)
DSG	Development Support Group
EFA	Education for All
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council (South Africa)
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GENFETQA	General Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
INSET	In-service education and training
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
IWSE	Internal Whole School Evaluation
LER	Learner to teacher ratio
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
(R)NCS (GET)	The *(*Revised) National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)
NCS(FET)	The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General)
NDE	National Department of Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NPRR	National Protocol for Recording and Reporting (Assessment)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OBA	Outcomes-based Assessment
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PGP	Personal Growth Plan
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy
PM	Performance Management
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SAG	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SBA	Standards-based accountability
SGB	School Governing Body
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SES	Socio-economic Status
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
Wits EPU	Education Policy Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

WITSETD

Teachers' quotations and drawings are referenced as follows:

An individual teacher's name is followed by the school's name then the date of the interview: "Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07". Teachers in the focus groups are identified only by the number of the focus group, followed by the date of the interview: "FG3/22/08/07". The names of schools and their numbers are provided in chapter 3.2.2.1, p. 78.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 The operationalisation of "quality" through school quality improvement reform approaches and the models of accountability that emerge 33

Table 2 The operationalisation of quality in key policies, evaluation and improvement projects and cross-national tests 40

Table 3 Conceptions of teacher professionalism: the autonomy versus accountability tension emerging from school reform innovations and strategies 55

Table 4 Outline profiles of the schools 78

Table 5 Summary of individual teacher participants 85

Table 6 Summary of focus group participants 86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Data analysis formal stages 97

Figure 2 Levels in the educational environment 144

Figure 3a and 3b The "nest of systems" 168

Figure 4 Elements of a teacher-centred model of quality improvement 189

LIST OF DRAWINGS

Drawing 1 "Workhorse" (FG4/06/09/07) 107

Drawing 2 "The entertainer" (FG1/08/08/07) 108

Drawing 3 "Superwoman" (FG1/08/08/07) 109

Drawing 4 "The octopus" (FG1/08/08/07) 110

Drawing 5 "Multi-armed juggler" (FG1/08/08/07) 111

Drawing 6 "Fact and fantasy" (FG4/06/09/08) 112

Drawing 7 "English teacher" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07) 113

Drawing 8 "Stuck and unstuck" (FG1/08/08/07) 120

Drawing 9 "Distressed teacher" (FG3/22/08/07) 122

Drawing 10 "Tightrope walker" (FG2/15/08/07) 124

Drawing 11 "Treadmill" (FG1/08/08/07) 125

Drawing 12 "Stewing pot" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07) 130

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The broad aim of this study is to investigate whether the South African education system, arguably the most inefficient education system in the world (Taylor, 2001: 15, in Brown, 2006: 2-4; Van der Berg and Louw, 2006: 1, 2; Van der Berg, 2007: 853-861; OECD, 2008: 20-22), can be transformed to ensure a quality learning and teaching environment.

More specifically, the study investigates in what ways a relevant and reliable accountability system, a framework for developing quality, which supports and strengthens the professional responsibility of teachers, could improve the delivery of quality education outcomes. "Quality", "accountability" and "professionalism" are the main constructs of this study. Its main units of analysis - the beliefs and professional experiences of teachers are studied in a range of "achieving schools"[1] in Gauteng, South Africa. The study selected teachers who have supported and facilitated improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in their schools that, relative to their context, are achieving good quality results in the Grade 12 final examinations. This evidence was used to provide a systematic description of what the term "quality teaching and learning" means. The study seeks to identify what teachers believe and experience as enabling and meaningful for the delivery of quality education with a view to strengthening these practices and eliminating those that constrain teachers and are not perceived as meaningful for quality improvement.

In contextual terms, teachers' beliefs and experiences are situated in the current policy environment which foregrounds "quality assurance" policies, including the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (ELRC, 2003) and Whole School Evaluation Policy (WSE) (Department of Education, 2001a). The study assumes that these policies have shaped teachers' ways of understanding "quality teaching and learning".

[1] For the purposes of this study an "achieving school" is one that achieves good matric results (a pass rate of 95% and above and university endorsement rate above the national average, 16,3% in 2006 (*Technical Report on the Senior Certificate national examination results*, DoE, 2006: 24)). Matric results are used as the proxy for quality education. This is discussed further in chapter 3.2.2 (p. 77) and footnote 101.

WiSETD

1.2 RATIONALE

1.2.1 Transformation and quality improvement measures in South Africa since 1994

1.2.1.1 National policies and significant national budget allocation

South African education is in a process of massive and critical reform and systemic and structural transformation. The large slice of the national budget allocated to education[2] and the wide range of new policies are aiming at quality improvement. Policies include the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (ELRC, 2003), the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (General) (Department of Education, 2002) and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) (Department of Education, 2003a). Much in the recent reports suggests that these are failing to accomplish their intended goals. The Systemic Evaluation Report on the Foundation Phase (Department of Education, 2003b), Grade 6 Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation Report (Department of Education, 2005a), the Annual Report 2006/7 (Gauteng Department of Education, 2007), and the Umalusi Report (2004), show that most previously advantaged schools and a much smaller number of previously disadvantaged schools are maintaining and even improving quality. However, far too many previously disadvantaged schools are lagging even further behind: "close to 80%" of South African schools are essentially dysfunctional" (Taylor, in Brown, 2006: 2, 3). The gap between the achieving and non-achieving schools appears to be widening instead of decreasing.

1.2.1.2 The context in which the improvement measures are applied

The entire education system including teacher professionalism and teacher identity in South Africa have been critically influenced by what Soudien (2007) calls the "'A' factor", referring to the effects of apartheid policy. Jansen (2003a) attributes the (professional) identity dilemma that teachers have in South Africa today to the autocratic apartheid state and its education policy. Under this system teachers were trained to be state operatives with little autonomy. Their responsibility was to comply with bureaucratic and political instructions. This attitude was reinforced through the nature of teacher education which was premised on fundamental pedagogy, a philosophy which promoted passiveness and obedience to authority (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999, in Wits EPU, 2005: 16). School inspections, a syllabus that prescribed official objectives, content and methodology, and hierarchical control were some of the means of forcing compliance. This compliant identity contrasts with the identity that a democratic education policy envisages and requires of teachers. Teachers were to be the "liberators" of the

[2] 5,3% of Gross Domestic Product in 2006 (*South Africa Yearbook*, 2006/2007: 195).

WitsETD

classroom, setting learners free and transforming the curriculum, an identity developed in the protest years of the 1970s and 1980s (Jansen, 2003a: 120, 121). In post-apartheid democratic South Africa, the policy framework appears to be "friendlier to teacher professionalism" (Wits EPU, 2005: 19). The Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE)[3] conceptualises teachers as highly skilled and knowledgeable, independent yet accountable professionals with the space to exercise professional judgment. This "sophisticated image" of a teacher conceptualising and executing more complex work, however, does not match the realities of the existing teaching corps (Wits EPU, 2005: 20, 21). Years of dependency and bureaucratic control have not equipped teachers to have the autonomous and confident identity necessary for this conception of professionalism. Many do not possess the knowledge and skill to match the demands of the new curriculum. Jansen (2003a) criticises education policy documents because they all contain "powerful images of the idealised teacher" which are conveyed "through drastic role changes for the teacher without addressing the practitioner directly" (p. 119). In addition, Jansen believes that these "'policy images' of teachers make demands that conflict with their 'personal identities' as practitioners" (*ibid*: 118). While the intention of the policy is to re-professionalise teachers the effect has been to de-professionalise them. Teachers feel over-burdened by the new demands for which they have neither the professional experience nor the support, leaving them overworked and demoralised (Chisholm *et al*., 2005).

1.2.1.3 The search for an understanding of "quality" education and the means to achieving it

In an attempt to achieve "quality" the centralised policies, for example, WSE[4] and IQMS[5], have defined quality as it may be observed in classrooms and schools. Are these definitions, performance criteria and descriptions rigid and static, or do they represent the best way to capture quality?

In the search for quality and the need to manage it (hold people accountable for delivering it), fixed definitions, performance criteria and descriptions have been arrived at without, so it seems, due regard for those closest to the point of implementation. Research suggests that teachers handle the resulting demands by pretending to implement the policies but, in fact, they merely tick boxes on a checklist. The intentions of the policies are not being served because teachers' beliefs and practices have remained largely unaltered while they comply superficially

[3] National Education Policy Act, Act 27 of 1996; Government Gazette, 414 (20844), February 2000.
[4] Department of Education, 2001b.
[5] ELRC, 2003.

WitsETD

or inconsistently with what is required (Chisholm *et al*., 2005: 186, 187; Class Act, 2007; Christie *et al*., 2007: 85, 86).

1.2.2 Centralised policy constrains teachers and their professionalism

This study argues that some of the responsibility for identifying and defining quality should come from the teachers in the daily practice of their professional work, as they are capable of greater flexibility and immediate response to changing demands. First, international research has shown that a centralised notion of quality has been shown to intensify teachers' work and expand their role.

> Teachers are depicted as being increasingly controlled by prescribed programs, mandated curricula and step-by-step methods of instruction. More than this, it is claimed, teachers' work has become increasingly intensified, with teachers expected to respond to greater pressures and comply with multiple innovations that are at best stable and at worst deteriorating. Under this view, extended professionalism is a rhetorical ruse, a strategy for getting teachers to collaborate willingly in their own exploitation as more and more effort is extracted from them. (Hargreaves, 1994: 117)

A similar account of teachers' experiences was given in the "Educator Workload in South Africa" (Chisholm *et al*., 2005: 184). According to the report there is much in the system that needs improvement but much of the work is done merely to satisfy a bureaucratic supervisor. Misunderstanding of policy and/or over-zealousness on the part of district officials and school management have seen teachers engaged in unproductive and meaningless paperwork. Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers have been encouraged in this fruitless endeavour by Education Department officials who judge quality on the basis of the number of blocks on a schedule that have been ticked.

The ability to focus on providing quality education is affected by the multiple roles teachers must play and may be hampered by the additional work which is required in view of the socio-economic conditions of many learners in South Africa. Teachers are routinely social workers, feeding scheme administrators and often surrogate parents for HIV/Aids orphans and children with unsupportive parents or from dysfunctional families. All of this has led to teacher overload and even burnout with a consequent loss of morale within the profession. Shisana *et al*. (2005) in *The Health of our Educators* report found that 55% of teachers indicated their intention to leave the profession. Low job satisfaction, including teaching conditions such as working hours, workload and multiple new policies, were cited as predictors for intention to leave (p. 111). The crisis of teacher retention and recruitment is attributable in no short

WISETD

measure to the effects and unintended consequences of these centralised policies. The changing and enlarging role of teachers in South Africa has to be recognised and addressed (Chisholm *et al*., 2005: xiii-xiv).

1.2.3 Why study teachers at schools that are functioning and achieving quality results?

There is growing evidence that the demand for improvement in quality has been followed by multiple interventions that have been largely ineffectual and frustrating. Describing poorly performing schools Taylor (2006) states: "Such schools are impervious to the kinds of interventions applied to date by both government and non-government sectors" (quoted in Brown, 2006: 12). Taylor draws on Hopkins's (1997) argument that "different improvement strategies and types of intervention are needed for schools at different stages of growth" (p. 401). Secondly, because most strategies, projects and research in South Africa over the last fifteen years have focused on the non-functioning schools (with limited success at bringing about improvement) I wanted to focus on teachers working in schools that are functioning and delivering quality. The experiences of teachers who achieve quality in these kinds of schools, both previously advantaged and disadvantaged, bear examination. The case study sample includes both previously advantaged and disadvantaged schools. The teachers in these schools constitute its unit of analysis.

I wanted to explore the teachers' perceptions regarding the regulation of their work and what they believe and experience as meaningful for the delivery of quality and what they feel constrains them. I hope the findings are helpful for targeting more effective strategies at teachers in functioning schools who have until now been subjected to one-size-fits-all quality improvement strategies. At the same time some of the findings might be generalisable to teachers in other types of schools. I believe much can be learned from situations where there is evidence of achievement of quality.[6]

1.2.4 The significance of teachers' perceptions and voice

In this study I examine the perceptions of teachers rather than observing their practices. I explore their beliefs and experiences as they describe them from their perspective. While observation of the teachers may show both the same and different things from their own descriptions of their experiences, a systematic account of their perceptions is a good start. It is teachers' experiences as they perceive them that motivate or demotivate them. It is this reality that is reflected and confirmed in the trio of HSRC (2005) reports (Shisana *et al*.; Chisholm *et*

[6] The more recent study of "*Schools that Work*" (Christie *et al*., 2007) which was done at the same time I was conducting my research on teachers also focused on schools that were achieving good Senior Certificate results.

WitsETD

al.; and Peltzer *et al*.) which point to a demotivated, demoralised teaching profession which feels overworked and overburdened, despite the ironic fact that teachers are not even working the official number of hours.

Teaching is a complex conceptual and emotional activity. Hargreaves *et al* (2001) describes research findings which show that if reforms are forced on teachers, teachers adapt to reform in ways that are "negative, cynical and professionally limiting". He identifies the necessity of obtaining teachers' understanding and commitment:

> A common administrative and legislative delusion and conceit is that reform can be imposed, even forced on teachers, without any regard for their values or inclusion of their voice. (p. 128)

I believe I can examine what is meaningful or constraining for teachers for the delivery of quality education from their perceptions. I also believe that if the teacher does not perceive/believe/experience a strategy as meaningful, no amount of persuasive argument will make it meaningful. The reality for the teacher is the perception. It is this that creates the teacher's experience of her work situation and determines whether or not she remains in the profession, has job satisfaction or can deliver quality education.

I believe that working with teachers' beliefs and experiences, particularly with teachers in "achieving schools" will help improve the quality of education. Valuable education inputs, for example, teaching and learning time, effort of learners and teachers, and teacher and management development courses could be directed to where their effect would be greatest. The notion of quality could become more focused and thus efforts to attain it more efficient. For as long as it is unclear what combination of processes form "quality education",[7] it is difficult to hold education practitioners accountable for the delivery of it. In other words, quality assurance policies and their corresponding measures of accountability need to ascertain what quality for a particular time and place <u>is</u> before any measuring of it can take place.

In seeking an understanding of "quality", the voice of teachers is relevant and needs to be heard. Teachers must not be excluded from making decisions about "quality". Specific processes that are found to have more significant positive impact could be strenuously implemented and supported. This would be preferable to making attempts to address every quality indicator simultaneously because one is driven by simple compliance. Without

[7] For example, excellent Senior Certificate results indicating excellent delivery of specific curriculum, which in most eyes is accountable performance, does not guarantee the academic competence of learners at higher education levels (Faller, 2004: 9).

WiSER

discounting the importance of reaching some kind of a general consensus on quality teaching, it is important to bear in mind that any attempt to find appropriate accountability measures will have to pay attention to the diversity of the South African educational reality.

1.2.5 Conclusion

There is much in the new policies and curriculum that is vague, undefined and open to ineffective interpretation. A framework for recognising and developing specific measures of quality appears to be essential for providing the necessary standard-setting, definitions and descriptions of levels of performance and expectations. The assumption of this research is that accountability measures must recognise the unique contexts of teachers and schools, contribute meaningfully to improving quality, and ensure that sufficient support is provided. Efforts to obtain improvement on a broad scale must include attention to the benefits of strengthening teacher professionalism, focusing on their knowledge, beliefs and practices.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Centralised policies have been introduced over the last fourteen years in order to improve the quality of the outcomes of the South African schooling system, arguably the most inefficient system in the world (Taylor, 2001). The deficiencies of the system are well-illustrated.[8] Government policy is intended to regulate teachers' work on the new curriculum.[9] The new curriculum follows the world trend of implementing a "standards-based mode of accountability" (Carnoy, 1999; Elmore, 2002a and 2002b). It is regulated by several kinds of accountability practices including the IQMS, (ELRC Resolutions 1 and 8 of 2003) and the WSE (Department of Education, 2001a) which have been shown to increase bureaucratic demands and controls on teachers' work.

Local research has begun to show that these measures have resulted in the intensification of teachers' work (Shisana *et al*., 2005), undermining of their professional trust (De Clercq, 2007a), and crowding out valuable teaching time (Chisholm *et al.*, 2005). Most disconcerting is that research on quality improvement is ambiguous about the usefulness of these measures as there is no clear evidence that using these bureaucratic measures results in improvement in the quality of teaching (Taylor, 2006; Soudien, 2007). Research is therefore needed to investigate

[8] Only about 50% of those who enter the school system reach Grade 12 (Crouch, 2005: 2); 4,7 million adults are illiterate and 4,9 million are functionally illiterate (Burger, 2006: 206); the percentage of learners qualifying at the end of their schooling for university endorsement is not increasing (Pandor, 2006: 7); many of those that do qualify are not succeeding; employers complain that school leavers are not equipped for the work-place and lack essential skills.

[9] The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) (RNCS), Department of Education, (2002) and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) (NCS), Department of Education, (2003a).

WISETD

how teachers experience these measures and explain the ways they understand the shortcomings of accountability practices. It is envisaged that examining the perceptions of teachers who work in schools of high quality will help explain the above problems and will provide a useful insight into what teachers see as productive for quality improvement. Indirectly this kind of research will provide a more detailed understanding of what Darling-Hammond (1989; 2004) calls a "professional model of accountability", one which foregrounds the importance of teacher's agency.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study examines the beliefs and experiences of teachers in a range of "achieving" secondary schools in Gauteng. It seeks to identify how these teachers experience the demands of accountability, namely, what they experience in the external environment as meaningful and enabling for the delivery of quality education in their schools and what they experience as meaningless and constraining. The study examines these by looking at the relationship between external factors in the school environment and internal factors within the teacher (their beliefs concerning professionalism and quality education). Analysis of this relation is used to describe the teachers' professional identity, particularly the teachers' accounts of its fragility.

1.5 MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

I began this research study with the aim of trying to understand the beliefs and experiences of teachers working in "achieving schools" regarding their understanding of accountability and what they believe contributes towards achieving quality education outcomes for learners in their schools. I wanted to do this because I sensed that the regulatory measures, of a largely bureaucratic nature, introduced over approximately the last ten years were not bringing about improvements in quality. My purpose was to try to find out from teachers what specific factors and practices they believe will improve the quality of teaching and learning, strengthening and supporting it, thus enhancing their ability to improve quality. I was wondering whether a model of accountability, such as Darling-Hammond's Professional Accountability Model (1989; 2004), could be the means for ensuring quality.

While collecting the data using the questions designed to investigate the issues stated above, I was confronted with widespread disillusionment in the teachers I interviewed. I began to sense that the teachers could see no purpose or value in what they were being required to do in terms of the type of regulatory measures being imposed on them. They could not easily identify factors in their working environment that supported improvement in the quality of education.

WiSETD

They were angry, resistant, stressed and demoralised. The responses began to construct a picture of teachers feeling besieged by the demands of the regulatory framework. I decided to find out why this was so. I wondered whether this stemmed from a misconception of professionalism. I wondered whether they feel attacked because they resist teacher regulation *per se*. I therefore decided to look first at all of the utterances in which the teachers speak about professionalism and teacher regulation. My initial analysis of these utterances showed that the teachers are confident and believe they are competent in their areas of specialisation; they are committed and willing to work hard to fulfil their responsibilities. Their responses to questions probing their understanding of professional autonomy indicated too that their notion of this concept accepts the principle of accountability. They are not resisting accountability demands because of an exaggerated or unreasonable view of autonomy. They, in fact, express a definite need for accountability. This led me to explore why the teachers feel demoralised. A picture emerged of a fragile professional identity under attack. Teachers had no vision of factors and practices that they believed would specifically improve the quality of their work.

I needed to change tack and so I decided to explore further the teachers' experience of fragility and anger. I decided to draw the teachers' conception of what could improve the quality of their work from their critique and expressions of anger. On that basis I construct, as a matter of conclusion to my findings, a start of a conception of a different regulatory framework. It is through exploring the teachers' fragile identity and their conception of autonomy that I began to understand what these teachers believe to be an appropriate form of regulatory control and what conception of professionalism will contribute towards quality improvement.

It is important to emphasise that I did not set out to investigate teacher identity specifically so this concept is not discussed in the literature review. The focus of the study includes an exploration of teacher identity because teachers' experiences pointed to an external attack on their identity and professionalism. The conceptual framework of the study provides a general explanation of teacher regulation as well as the teachers' experiences of the new kinds of regulatory framework.

The central question I explore is why teachers believe their professionalism is under attack, what they believe can improve the quality of learning outcomes in their schools and what model of teacher regulation seems to emerge from their accounts.

In the light of the above, the study investigates the following questions:

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1. What is quality that is relevant, credible and legitimate for South Africa? Is it consistent with what is valued internationally?
2. What conceptions of quality do teachers in "achieving schools" value and what mode of teacher regulation seems to emerge from their accounts?
3. How do teachers in "achieving schools" experience the current accountability reforms and what can we learn from their experiences about their conception of quality?

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

I structure the report in the following manner:

In Chapter One I provide the introduction to the study. I give the rationale for the study and state the research problem and aims. The South African education system has failed to deliver quality education despite significant transformation strategies and considerable financial expenditure. This has given rise to centralised policies aimed at quality improvement which have demanded accountability of teachers but have thereby increased their workload, led to burn-out and low morale. In this study I aim to understand whether greater focus on the professionalism of teachers will bring about changes in teachers' beliefs about quality and accountability that will enhance the government's efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms in South Africa.

In Chapter Two which comprises a literature review of the three constructs that the study focuses on: "quality", "accountability" and "professionalism", I identify notions of "quality" and show the tensions within these understandings. How "quality" is operationalised is the next focus. I compare the three main approaches to school reform with specific reference to their impact on teacher regulation and describe the resulting models of accountability in a table format, critiquing them for their effectiveness in bringing about quality improvement. I then examine, also in tabular format, the operationalisation of quality in key South African policies, evaluation and improvement projects as well as cross-national tests to assess their impact particularly on aspects of teachers' work and sense of professionalism. I briefly examine conceptions of teaching as a profession, teacher professionalism and professionalisation of teaching and in another table I compare the ages and types of professionalism and the meaning each of these had for teachers' work, its regulation and effectiveness for quality improvement. I describe the emerging tension between professional autonomy and accountability. I then search for an appropriate conception of professionalism and model of accountability that recognises the professionalism of teachers and that will lead to quality education delivery in this postmodern age. I identify democratic professionalism and professional accountability as being

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more appropriate. I also discuss the need for building teacher capacity and internal accountability. Finally I conclude the chapter by stating the three conceptual claims for the study.

In Chapter Three I describe the research design of this study. I restate the purpose and aim of the study; identify the research questions; and explain the methodology of the case study, detailing how the sample was selected, the data gathered, analysed and interpreted and reliability and validity issues handled. I provide background information of the schools in the sample.

In Chapter Four I describe the factors that operate within teachers and their impact on the teachers' ability to deliver quality education. I describe the data gathered on the two aspects of teachers' professionalism: what they believe about their professional identity and how they experience it and their beliefs about the tension between professional autonomy and accountability.

In Chapter Five I deal with the factors operating in the teachers' external environment that impact on their ability to deliver quality education. I describe what teachers experience as enabling and meaningful and what they experience as constraining and meaningless.

In Chapter Six I analyse these findings, foregrounding the centrality of teachers in the education system, specifically because of their role in quality improvement. I discuss the findings in terms of the three claims in the conceptual framework. First, I explain teachers' experience of their professionalism being under attack with a view to identifying de-professionalising factors. Second, I explore teachers' views of what can improve the quality of education both at their own internal level and in the external environment leading to the understanding that for quality improvement strategies to be effective teachers' internal capacity/professionalism and internal accountability needs to be developed so that they are able to meet external demands. When this happens there is also a balance between autonomy and accountability. Third, I identify and discuss a teacher-centred model of accountability which strengthens and respects the professionalism of teachers as the one best suited to bringing about quality improvement.

In Chapter Seven, I draw some conclusions pointing to the actions that can be taken with immediate effect to enable teachers to improve quality despite the context in which they work. I state the implications for policy developments and improvement initiatives, specify the recommendations of the study, and propose suggestions for further research.

WitsETD

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study seeks to investigate how teachers experience their professionalism in the current regulatory context and what form of control (accountability) they believe would improve the quality of learning outcomes. To do this it is necessary first to gain an understanding of three concepts that are key to this investigation: quality, accountability and professionalism.

2.1 QUALITY AND ITS OPERATIONALISATION

2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by looking at the concept "quality" because it is the drive to improve quality that has given rise to the current regulatory conditions. In this section I provide a brief review of what is understood by the term "quality" when it is used in the current education context. Features and descriptors of quality and the tensions between them, as well as the implications for quality assurance are identified. This is followed by an examination of "quality" in the South African context. The historical context and a brief historical overview that focuses on approaches aimed at improving quality in schools including the school effectiveness and school improvement movements, the "outside-in" versus the "inside-out" approaches, and the "new accountability" or merged approach are provided in tabular format. The various key policy, evaluation and improvement projects and cross national tests are then reviewed also in tabular format. I have chosen to use tables in order to present a large amount of literature in a condensed form. This format enables me to provide an overview of concepts, to classify approaches and their impact and to make comparisons easily apparent. This should help the reader grasp more readily the broad sweep of ideas and their comparative advantages and disadvantages.

2.1.2 What is understood by the term "quality" education?

The section that follows entertains the following claims:

- Quality is a contested concept.[10]
- Quality is not a zero sum process; it is shaped by contextual realities.
- Globalisation has created its own demands on education delivery. South Africa operates in a global context[11] and thus responds to global demands for quality.

[10] "quality" is one of Gallie's (1964) "essentially contested concepts" (like art, religion and democracy).
[11] In the global context the person with the most valuable "knowledge portfolio", a product of quality education, commands the greatest economic and other rewards and contributes more significantly to the national economy (Hargreaves, 2003). As discussed below South African learners are currently performing extremely badly when compared with their global counterparts.

WitsETD

- The desired balance between ensuring access and quality education for all necessarily creates tensions for the teacher in delivering quality.

"Quality" in education is a contested subject. It is exceptionally difficult to capture and define because quality means different things to different people and is dependent on the primary concerns, goals and interests of stakeholders. Nevertheless, the question is often asked, "Would we recognise quality if we saw it?" The answer commonly given is vague: although it is not easy to describe and define "quality", we would know it when we saw it.

2.1.3 Features, descriptors and principles of quality

Winch in *Manufacturing Educational Quality* (1996) links the concept "education" with the idea of "worthwhileness" (p. 28). He argues that education that is deemed worthwhile could be considered quality education. Seeing quality through the notion of "worthwhileness" helps Winch (1996) identify the main features of quality: "prestige or positional advantage, conformity to standards, customer satisfaction[12] and customer empowerment" (p. 29). There is, however, a conflict between these features. "Prestige or positional advantage" implies excellence that is not available to everyone. This would clearly not meet the needs of broader society. "Conformity to standards" implies that the education quality can be measured against a set of common standards usually defined by professional experts (the producers). If, on the other hand, quality is judged by "customer satisfaction" then quality would be variously understood in terms of the diverse needs of the various customers and what they believe satisfies their needs. This is so particularly if "quality" is also judged in terms of "customer empowerment" which is value-based and might elicit different views amongst customers. Given the diversity of society and its democratic order, it is difficult to see how these four features of "quality" could be aligned.

Aspin *et al*. (1994) state that "quality" may be associated with the following words: "efficiency", "effectiveness", "choice", "excellence", "equity" and "social justice" (p. 35). As with Winch's (1996) features of quality there is tension between these descriptors of quality. Aspin *et al*. point out the following tensions between these descriptors. These include: the tension between providing opportunities for all to achieve while at the same time demanding a high standard of specialised knowledge; ensuring high scores on standardised tests and neglecting the broader goals of education; and centralising the regulation of teachers' work and recognising their autonomy (Aspin *et al*., 1994: 37). In Aspin *et al*.'s terms we are confronted

[12] Customer satisfaction includes the idea that because education is a public service it has to be delivered at a reasonable cost.

WitsETD

with questions such as 'quality of what?', 'quality for whom?', and 'the pursuit of quality in whose interests?' (*ibid*: 37). For example, success in examinations (measurable aspects of quality) may aid the learner in finding employment which will benefit society and the individual but at the same time parents want their children to be happy at school and to develop "in a caring atmosphere, leading to the ability to get on with other people." They judge success at school by the growth in their child's "humane qualities"[13] (*ibid*: 42, 43).

In addition to the features of quality identified above, Winch (1996) adds a further two: "achievement of these public goods at reasonable cost" and "fitness for purpose" (p. 29). These complicate matters further as "reasonable cost" could be in conflict with the notion of quality that education consumers believe would lead to "customer satisfaction". "Fitness for purpose" is another term which is value-based and would lead to tensions between the different interest groups.

In view of the above conflicting considerations, Winch (1996) argues that "quality" is an "evaluative term": saying something is of quality implies approval of it. However, each person's conception of quality could be different. What is quality for one person might not be so for another. A person who sees quality education as that which leads to "prestige or positional advantage" would not regard education to be of quality merely because it conformed to set education standards, if those standards did not lead to the desired excellence which promoted "positional advantage" (p. 30).

This conflict between notions of quality presents difficulties, when, as Winch states, quality assurance and accountability measures have sprung from the need to measure performance against these conceptions of quality.

The Education for All Global Report 2005 (EFA Report), entitled *Education for All, The Quality Imperative* (UNESCO, 2004b), also acknowledges that there is no agreed single definition of quality. However, it identifies two principles that commonly characterise attempts at defining educational objectives. The first recognises learners' cognitive development as a major explicit goal of all education systems. The second concerns the promotion of common shared values along with creative and emotional development (p. 19). These principles cover the purpose of education, namely, to develop the whole human being: both the mind and spirit. The first objective can be measured reasonably easily. The success which the education system has in achieving this is a measure of the country's educational quality. The second objective is

[13] Non-tangible qualities which are virtually impossible to measure (Aspin *et al*., 1994: 43).

WitsETD

more difficult to assess. In addition to these principles, further generally agreed quality objectives are identified which add more detail to what is implied in the principles: "respect for individual rights, improved equity of access and learning outcomes and increased relevance" (*ibid*: 19).[14]

The central problematic in the debate on quality is that for some, quality is determined by the extent that programmes aim to achieve the optimum development of every child regardless of ability, handicap or personal history. This conception of quality highlights equity and social justice. However, others conceive quality as education for excellence and believe that emphasis on equity does not promote excellence. They see a tension between equity and quality if equal treatment means that the same education is provided to everyone (Aspin *et al*., 1994: 38, 39). In organisational terms the system could be highly efficient economically but perceived as ineffective because it fails to meet the educational choice of parents (*ibid*: 41). It might meet the defined standards efficiently but because the standards do not seem to bring about what parents consider as quality it is perceived as ineffective.

In order to address the tensions and to achieve agreement on how to meet educational goals, Aspin *et al*. (1994) articulate a theory of quality schooling. They do this inductively by examining empirical evidence at different sites of education and analysing the views of "principal actors and representatives of the various constituencies involved" (p. 49). Extrapolating from effective schooling data and from other sources, they suggest five broad aspects of schooling in terms of which education quality can be judged:

1. The characteristics of "graduates" of the site: what they can do; what they know and understand and what values, attitudes and beliefs they hold as a result of their education;
2. The "features of the education processes and activities" at the site: planning of teaching and learning, lesson delivery; the what and how of assessment; the range and quality of feedback; learner progression rates; parental and community involvement in the school; performance accountability measures;
3. "The range, type, excellence and appropriateness of the resources and facilities" at the site including: trained teachers, teaching and learning materials, opportunities for engaging in learning;
4. The organisation, administration and management practices at the site including: structure, range and relevance of the curriculum, policies and their responsiveness to change and public scrutiny;

[14] These principles have been incorporated in the aims of education set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which underpins the UNESCO and UNICEF position on quality.

5. The "tone, atmosphere and ethos" of the institution which includes: "a secure, relaxed, non-threatening supportive and purposeful atmosphere", "relationships based on mutual trust and respect", "equality of opportunity". (*ibid*: 199, 200)

In this study I use a method similar to Aspin *et al.'*s to construct an understanding of what teachers in "achieving schools" believe enables them to deliver quality education. My focus is on teachers' beliefs and experiences of what happens/exists at their "sites" and what they believe contributes meaningfully to quality education. I examine their beliefs about what enables and what constrains quality improvement with reference to the operationalisation of curriculum, accountability measures; provision of physical resources; teacher regulation and administration of teaching; and relationship with parents, community and the education department. In the next section I examine four education traditions in order to understand what constitutes quality for each tradition and how it is judged. I am particularly interested in the impact that the approach has on teachers, how they and their work are conceived and how they are regulated. An understanding of each tradition's approach to teacher professionalism and accountability are the focus of the examination.

2.1.4 Approaches to quality of four education traditions

In this section the approaches to quality of four education traditions are discussed briefly to gain an understanding of what each tradition values or rejects in its pursuit of quality. The focus of my analysis here is on how teachers and teaching should be regulated, for the purposes of achieving, improving and sustaining quality, according to each of these approaches. The EFA Report (UNESCO, 2004b) identifies three education traditions: the humanist, behaviourist and critical traditions. In addition, the report identifies an approach that challenges the legacies of colonialism which it terms the "indigenous approach" (p. 34). Each of these four traditions contributes to the quality debate and creates its own understanding of how education quality objectives can be attained (p. 19).

The "humanist tradition"[15] rejects "standardised, prescribed, externally controlled curricula" which are seen to limit the opportunity for learners to construct their own meanings and restrict the degree to which educational programmes respond to individual learners. Their approach regards the teacher as a facilitator of learning and not an instructor and emphasises that learning is a "process of social practice rather than the result of individual intervention" (*ibid*:

[15] John Locke, J-J. Rousseau, as discussed in Russell, 1961: 577-583, quoted in the UNESCO EFA Report (2004b: 32); John Dewey, as discussed by Fenwick, 2003: 31, quoted in the EFA Report (*ibid*: 32); Piaget (1972); and Vygotsky (1978), referred to in the EFA Report (*ibid*: 33).

WitsETD

32). In this tradition which views human nature as essentially good[16] and respects the uniqueness of the individual and his/her autonomous behaviour, quality is given a relativist interpretation as each person defines reality for herself or himself. This tradition respects teachers' autonomy as they use their professional judgment to facilitate the learning process. Because the individual learner is regarded highly, attempts to prescribe teachers' work are considered impossible, and irrelevant, and are therefore rejected. The quality of teachers' work is judged by the degree to which they enable their learners to develop their unique potential. This aligns with one of Winch's (1996) features of quality "customer satisfaction" (p. 29) and one set of Aspin *et al.*'s (1994) interrelated quality goals: "meeting the immediate personal needs of the students so that all students are enabled to become everything they want" (p. 44) or the quality descriptor "choice" (p. 35) (see chapter 2.1.3, p. 21 above). This tradition relies heavily on teachers' individual capacity and professionalism. The form of accountability that would regulate teachers' work would be what Darling-Hammond (1989 and 2004) refers to as "professional accountability" (see chapter 2.1.6, Table 1, p. 33 below).

The "behaviourist tradition"[17] endorses curricula that are highly "standardised, externally defined and controlled". Assessment serves the purpose of objectively measuring performance against pre-set criteria; rewards and punishments are planned for consequences of the examinations and tests. In this approach the teacher is regarded as the expert who "controls stimuli and responses" by designing learning tasks to reinforce incrementally desired associations in the mind of learners (UNESCO, 2004b: 33). Quality is judged according to how well these objectives are achieved. In this tradition the view of quality aligns with the feature that Winch (1996) describes as "conformity to standards" (p. 29) and the descriptors of quality that Aspin *et al*. (1994) identify as "efficiency" and "effectiveness" (p. 35) (see 2.1.3, p. 21 above). In this tradition it may be inferred, teachers' work is highly regulated and monitored in terms of standardised and prescribed curricula. Teachers' practice is carefully designed to meet learning outcomes (in an efficient and effective manner). Teachers are required to deliver strictly in accordance with government's requirements. Teachers' autonomy and their professionalism are restricted. Darling-Hammond (1989; 2004) describes this mode of regulating teachers' work as "bureaucratic" (see chapter 2.1.6, Table 1, p. 33 below).

[16] Within the constraints of heredity and environment (*ibid*: 32).
[17] As discussed in the EFA Report (*ibid*: 33) this tradition relied on Skinner's behaviourist theory and two types of conditioning – respondent and operant (1968). It attempted to apply the management theories of F.W. Taylor to education. It also used Bloom's taxonomy (1956) and Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949) to set educational objectives and testing instruments.

The third approach broadly termed the "critical tradition"[18] is a response to the humanist and behaviourist traditions. The focus of the critical tradition is on the role that education plays in eliminating inequality in access to and quality of outcomes of education. It is critical of a model of transmission of knowledge that only serves more privileged groups. Consequently, for this tradition quality education is that which promotes social change. Its curriculum and teaching methods encourage "critical analysis of social power relations and the way in which formal knowledge is produced and transmitted" (UNESCO, 2004: 34). Since this tradition is founded largely on the humanist tradition it relies on a high level of teacher professionalism, expertise and understanding of and commitment to "emancipatory pedagogy" (*ibid*: 34). This tradition is critical of one of the features identified by Winch (1996): "prestige or positional advantage" but is supportive of another one: "customer empowerment" (p. 29). It emphasises the quality descriptors identified by Aspin *et al*. (1994): "equity" and "social justice" (p.35) and supports the EFA Report (UNESCO, 2004b) quality objective of: "improved equity of access and learning outcomes and increased relevance" (p. 19) (see chapter 2.1.3, p. 21 above). Teachers' work is not rigidly prescribed or regulated. The view of accountability would align with Darling-Hammond's (1989 and 2004) "professional accountability" (see chapter 2.1.6, Table 1, p. 33 below).

The fourth approach is broadly termed the "indigenous tradition"[19] While not very different from aspects of the humanist and the critical tradition, this tradition serves as a challenge to the dominant ideas about quality of the developed northern hemisphere countries or former colonial powers, like the United Kingdom and France. Quality in terms of this tradition ensures relevance by developing curriculum content, pedagogies and assessment locally. This approach believes that learning should move beyond the classroom and include non-formal and life-long learning activities (*ibid*: 34). Quality would be judged in terms of the relevance of the education for the socio-cultural circumstances of the nation and learner (*ibid*: 34). This aligns with the quality features of "customer empowerment" and "fitness for purpose" identified by Winch (1996: 29) as well as Aspin *et al.*'s (1994) quality goals for schools as the centre for: "meeting the immediate personal needs of students so that all students become everything they want" and ensuring "students are responsive to the needs of society" (p. 44). The EFA Report

[18] In the EFA Report (UNESCO, 2004b: 33, 34) refers to neo-Marxist approaches of Bourdieu and Passerson (1964), Bowles and Gintis (1976), and others, the de-schoolers, for example, Illich (1971), Foucault who argued that "power and power relationships create the conditions for the production of knowledge" and Freire (1985) who emphasised the emancipatory quality of letting students find their own voice.

[19] In Tanzania, Nyerere (1968) developed his educational aims including the preservation and transmission of traditional values, promotion of national and local self-reliance and "fostering co-operation and promoting equality in southern Africa". Tutu (2000) promoted the concept of "ubuntu" as an alternative vision of education which embraced the "social nature of being rather than individual advancement" (as discussed in the EFA Report, UNESCO, 2004b: 34).

WiSETD

(UNESCO, 2004b) quality principle of particular significance in this tradition is that of "increased relevance" (p. 19) (see chapter 2.1.3, p. 23 above). This tradition also relies on teachers' capacity and professionalism to deliver a uniquely relevant learning programme in which learners participate actively. Prescription and regulation of teachers' work is not a strong feature in this approach because it depends on teachers' recognising and responding appropriately to their learners' prior knowledge and what they believe their curriculum needs are. Once again, Darling-Hammond's (1989; 2004) "professional accountability" model (see chapter 2.1.6, Table 1, p. 33 below) would seem an appropriate view of accountability.

The absence of a common understanding of what quality education is makes it difficult to assess quality in a specific and focused way. Yet some common assumptions can be raised, specifically with regard to teachers' work. In all but the behaviourist tradition quality is a relative concept and dependent on learners' circumstances or needs and teachers' professional autonomy is considered crucial for promoting the diverse needs of groups of learners. It is also difficult to regulate and monitor the work of teachers in terms of a fixed notion of quality. Teachers are internally regulated and accountable in terms of their own professional standards in three of the approaches. The behaviourists, on the other hand, do regulate teachers' work and monitor its quality by measuring it against prescribed externally set standards or learning objectives.

The understanding of quality adopted in this study is located largely in the humanist tradition but with elements of the other traditions. The teachers in the study are all practising in South African schools and are affected by the policies aimed at transforming society. It will therefore be relevant to investigate the extent to which their beliefs and practices take cognisance of characteristics associated with the critical and indigenous traditions. Both these traditions require the education process to address inequality in access and learning outcomes in order to ensure quality education for all. In addition, this study explores the tensions that teachers experience in meeting the objectives of quality in the humanist tradition (meeting the needs of individual learners) while at the same time being expected to meet the objectives in the behaviourist tradition (complying with pre-specified objectives).

2.1.5 Operationalisation of "quality"

Information and innovation, the drivers of the global economy, are knowledge intensive. Consequently knowledge is the most highly valued commodity in the global economy and is essential for creating the conditions for economic and social development of countries (Carnoy, 1999). According to Carnoy, the skills of the workforce required in this kind of economy

WisERD

demand a change in the nature of education. This necessitates increased investment in education. The major investor in education is almost always the state. For developing countries such as South Africa this is a heavy burden. Education constitutes a significant slice of public expenditure (averaging over the last ten years approximately 21% of total state finance and 6% of GDP) (Jansen and Taylor, 2003: 18). This takes the debate on quality to the question of accountability or the degree to which the public sees returns for its investment in education. The argument for accountability goes as follows: the public wants to see the delivery of higher quality education to all its citizens in an equitable manner. In addition, international capital seeks out the highest returns which have historically come from economies of countries whose citizens have higher education levels.

The state is therefore pressurised to extend education opportunities for all, which obviously comes with high expectations from the public. The demand on the state is translated as a demand on schools to demonstrate quality, in particular in the way they use their material and educational resources:

> Researchers report that schools and teachers with the same resources do different things, with different results for students' learning. Resources are not self-enacting, and differences in their effects depend on differences in their use. (Cohen *et al*., 2002: 80, 81)

In South Africa currently, because of the persistent inability of our education system to demonstrate improved quality outcomes, there is a growing demand for "quality" from civil society and from government[20] and continuous production of research and reflection about it.[21] The question in the debate is, of course, how to measure quality and how to regulate the work of teachers in order to achieve it. Hart (1997) argues that while everybody believes "quality matters" the talk about it is vacuous. This vagueness, in Hart's opinion, includes using expressions such as, "excellence" or "standards" or "good practice". Having an abstract notion of quality prevents criticism because everything is included (p. 296). Hart acknowledges though that education standards are difficult to measure, emphasising that education stakeholders (government, students and educators) could all have different understandings of the purpose for which education is to be fit (*ibid*: 300, 301). Hart's view is consistent with

[20] From civil society: "Equity and equal access to mediocrity is an injustice that undermines the future of our nation" (Ramphele, 2008: 226); from government: "I would suggest that, given the urgent necessity to turn around our learning performance, we should all be devising strategies for improved performance and expanding success" (Speech of the Minister of Education to the South African Principals' Association, 4 September, 2008), and resolutions of a political party on education: "The ANC to focus rigorously on the quality of education" (ANC 52nd National Conference Resolutions, 2007: paragraph 45, p. 14) .

[21] For example, SACMEQ; PIRLS Study; Van der Berg, 2007.

WitsETD

Doherty's (2008) criticism of the "fitness for purpose" argument. Doherty argues that "people are not widgets" and the idea of "fitness for purpose" angers teachers who see it as an unimaginative attempt to impose a manufacturing culture on schools (p. 256).

In view of the specific nature of education, Hart suggests a different notion which derives from T.S. Eliot: "the common pursuit of true judgment". This notion entails "collaborative activity of different persons in criticism that sustains standards within the humanities and in human life in general: in the arts, in morality, in politics and in education" (p. 302). Hart emphasises the need for people to be engaged actively in making personal judgments and being challenged by other people's contrary opinions. In this manner standards are continuously reflected upon; they cannot become "stale and inert". True quality assurance requires personal judgment which is amenable to challenge, change and improvement rather than measurement against fixed, predetermined standards which attempt to fix standards for all times and places.

Doherty (2008) suggests that Total Quality Management (TQM), a holistic management system in the context of quality assurance, could serve as an appropriate quality assurance approach.[22] TQM relies on the commitment of everyone in the organisation for managing his or her contribution and the incorporation of some form of "continuous improvement cycle" [23] (p. 262), and is not imposed from the top-down. Evaluation takes the form of self-assessment and in some cases external peer-group assessment.

In South Africa local researchers are engaged in finding an appropriate and relevant definition of quality for South Africa. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 1993 report on *Schools and Quality* suggests that a tight definition of quality would make the assumption that underlying the complexity of education systems is a set of relatively clear and non-conflicting education goals.

South African thinking was also influenced by Adams (1993) and Harvey and Green (1993) (discussed in Motala, 2001: 66). For them quality implied "something exceptional or fit for purpose or providing value for money or transformative or empowering" (*ibid*: 66).[24] South

[22] Doherty (2008) asserts TQM is foundational to most quality assurance systems in operation today in Britain: the British Quality Foundation Model (BQFM), the European Foundation for Quality Management Model (EFQM), ISO 9000, and Ofsted (U.K.) also has been influenced by TQM (p. 262).

[23] Deming's cycle: plan, do, check, improve, plan …; the EQFM RADAR cycle: approach, deployment, assessment, review, results, approach …; the teacher education cycle: plan, implement, evaluate, improve, plan … (Doherty, 2008: 262).

[24] Once again, tensions between conceptions of quality are evident. "Something exceptional" implies the notion of excellence whereas "fitness for purpose" could be something less than that if, in the opinion of policy-makers, a lower quality education was deemed good enough for the needs of the majority. "Value for money" could imply the best that could be afforded and efficiently delivered but not necessarily "exceptional". "Transformative" and

WitsETD

African researchers added further objectives of quality, for example, Webstock (1994) demands "fitness of purpose" and "value-added"; Crouch (1996) said quality should lead to "cognitive equity"; and Morrow (1992) speaks of "epistemological access" (in Motala, 2001: 66, 67). Motala (2001) sums up the difficulty involved in conceptualising quality:

> In the South African context, the term quality is being applied in a very eclectic way. There is a need for consensus on quality, to accept that it has normative and descriptive criteria, and to extend the notion of quality as adding value, as empowerment, and as epistemological access. (*ibid*: 74)

The complexity of "quality" is demonstrated by the number of policies, policy studies and improvement projects which the South African Government has commissioned in the past ten years. The public exerts high pressure on teachers to deliver standards of education that are worthwhile and internationally compatible. This is taking place at a time when data on learners' performance show a clear, bleak picture.[25] The number of roles and competences teachers are expected to perform, the number of policies that affect their day-to-day performance suggest a structural change in the form in which teachers' work is regulated. They also suggest a serious intensification of their workload. The analysis of quality as it transpires in all of these policies and evaluation studies shows a broad set of demands at the macro and micro levels. Teachers are expected to deliver an added value to learners whose home background and school environment are characterised by poor material and human resources, poor literacy practices, high levels of absenteeism (among learners and teachers) and poor internal accountability. Despite all of these factors, teachers are expected to find meaningful pedagogical ways to improve time on task and create a classroom climate that will promote the idea of a confident and independent learner.

Three approaches to reform have emerged over the last sixty years.[26] A metaphor is used to describe the first two: The "Outside-In" approach aligned to the behaviourist tradition and the

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"empowering" rely on value-judgments and depending on the agendas being promoted could either complement or conflict with other notions of quality.

[25] Reflecting on analysis of the TIMSS and TIMSS-R, SACMEQII and the Grade 3 and 6 Systemic Evaluation results Soudien (2007) concludes: "The system, it should be boldly acknowledged, is not working for the majority of South Africa's children" and "the impact it (the country) is making on the quality of the learning experience of young children is questionable" (*ibid*: 188). According to Van der Berg (2006) schools with lower level SES (traditionally black) not only fail to improve the life chances of low SES learners but also reduce the chances of those from better backgrounds. Van der Berg states that there is a "weak relationship between schooling inputs (including SES) and student performance in poor schools" and "… both poor and rich students are likely to perform better in richer schools, but rich students gain more from the superior quality of education in such schools" (p. 10).

[26] The failure of education systems, particularly in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, to deliver the "quality" of education desired by governments prompted research which produced the significant Coleman Report and Plowden Report and resulting reforms. Attempts to influence the quality of the teaching and learning experience for children can be traced back to the Progressivism Movement of the late nineteenth century

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"Inside-Out" aligned to the humanist tradition (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998; Muller and Roberts, 2000; Hargreaves *et al*. (Eds), 1998). The "outside-in" metaphor describes the reform initiatives which attempted to improve schools by applying external strategies, programmes and "indices of effectiveness" (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 2). The "inside-out" metaphor refers to reform efforts that come from within, that is, school-based reform (*ibid*: 2000: 2), focusing on matters such as school leadership, and the social and pedagogical interactions of teachers and students (Lieberman in Hargreaves *et al*., 1998: 15, 16). The "inside-outs" are strongly influenced by progressivism[27] which promotes "learner-centredness, teacher autonomy, local control of learning and the curriculum, a fiercely anti-bureaucratic sentiment, and a celebration of creativity, idiosyncrasy, and humanistic values" (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 4). The third approach is the merged paradigm (Reynolds, 1998), a combination of these two approaches, which arose because of the failure of the exclusive use of one or other of the first two approaches to effect sustained and widespread improvement in quality (Fullan, 2001: 267). The "new, merged paradigm" uses mixed strategies[28] and promotes the alignment between external and internal accountability (Fuhrman, 1999: 7). In the next section I describe and analyse these three approaches with particular focus on their impact on teacher regulation.

2.1.6 The operationalisation of "quality" through school quality improvement reform approaches and the models of accountability that emerge

2.1.6.1 Introduction to Table 1

In Table 1 (overleaf) I examine these three main reform approaches: the "outside-in", "inside-out" and the "merged paradigm", with particular emphasis on how "quality" is operationalised and what the resulting impact is on teacher regulation. I use a table format for my analysis in order to present a description of and comparison between the three approaches in a succinct, focused manner. I describe the features of each approach with respect to how it conceptualises quality, the teachers' role, form of teacher regulation, and the model of accountability which emerges. I conclude with a critique of the impact of this accountability model on teachers and quality improvement. I chose to align reform approaches to approaches to "quality" and "accountability" because this study, which is conducted in the context of greater accountability demands, is investigating in what ways an appropriate system of accountability could be the means for improving the quality of education. Because of the growing tension around teachers'

(Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1286; Muller and Roberts, 2000: 4). However, the school reform movement which aimed at improving the "quality" of education provided at schools began in earnest after the release of two damning reports: the Coleman Report (1966) in the United States of America, entitled *Equality of Educational Opportunity* and the Plowden Report (1967) in the United Kingdom, entitled *Children and their Primary Schools*.

[27] Probably the first modern school reform movement, emerging pre-1950s with Dewey as one of the leaders.

[28] For example, performance-based reforms and Fuhrman's (1999) "new accountability" model.

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sense of professionalism, autonomy, and role in bringing about quality improvement, I also include a description of what is expected of teachers (their role and the form in which they are regulated). This study is investigating how quality can be improved by means of a system of accountability that specifically recognises the professionalism of teachers. Each reform approach is therefore described and compared to ascertain which one is most likely to achieve this. I link the reform approaches to the approaches to quality advocated by the four traditions described in chapter 2.1.4, p 24, because in the absence of a common understanding of what quality education actually is, and therefore how it can be measured, the approach to quality of each education tradition is the closest we can come to understanding and measuring quality. The description of the features of each reform approach is presented vertically and the comparison between these features is read horizontally. See Table 1 overleaf.

2.1.6.2 Table 1 summary and conclusions

The "outside-in" reform approaches gave rise to tension between teachers' sense of autonomy and compliance with externally imposed demands and, in general, failed to bring about improvement in quality[29]. Strategies were perceived to be "top-down"; teachers had not thought of them for themselves and so they were consequently in conflict with the "truths of the workplace" and the "professional dignity and competence of teachers" (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1289). The amount of teacher training and school capacity-building required to implement the programmes was underestimated. The understanding of how quality can be improved in this model is simplistic. Reforms virtually ignore the deep-rooted, larger systemic quality issues that the mere better management of teachers, textbooks and time cannot fix. The tendency to blame the teacher for quality (achievement) failure by not managing his or her expertise, the textbook or time efficiently is based on the false assumption that the problem is that of the individual teacher. Soudien (2007) emphasises that it is wrong to think that the entire quality problem can be solved by teachers taking more responsibility and being held accountable (p. 191). He argues that current strategies are "premised on a managerial mind-set and misrecognise the extent and nature of the stubborn practices that have evolved amongst teachers and learners" attributable largely to the apartheid legacy, what Soudien terms the "'A' factor" (*ibid*: 191).

[29] The results have been disappointing and generally inconclusive: Increasing the inputs for teacher education has a positively significant effect on learner performance in 56% of cases, spending more money on facilities has a positive effect in 65% of the cases and per pupil expenditure has a positive effect in 50% of the cases. The results for pupil to teacher ratio improvement are not clear: in 46% of cases it is insignificant, 27% positive and 27% negative. (UNESCO, 2004b: 65). The decrease in learner to teacher ratio, improved teachers' qualifications and increased expenditure per learner over approximately forty years in the United States yielded a 0% improvement in Mathematics and Science scores in 1994 (UNESCO, 2004b: 60).

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The "inside-out" approach which relied on teachers' professional accountability did not create tension for teachers between autonomy and control but it failed to achieve significant improvement in quality. The lessons learned from the "inside-out" approach to reform, according to Calhoun and Joyce (1998) were, firstly, that the process of engaging in site-based, collegial, shared solution-seeking was not enough. Where the reform was successful schools had been supported by an expert facilitator and this assistance had been sustained over a considerable time period. Secondly, it has been found that the "idiosyncratic normative structure", the embedded and persistent norms in the school's unique culture, create an automatic and almost intractable force in opposition to innovation unless the innovation takes hold and becomes institutionalised within a year and a half of the initial commitment (*ibid*: 1293).[37]

The merged paradigm approach to quality improvement, that is, performance-based accountability or "new accountability"[38] does rely on teachers' professional accountability; teachers are expected to exercise professional judgment. Control takes the form of standards and/or targets set for performance which schools/teachers have to attain. The main difficulty with this approach is that if teachers do not have the capacity to meet the standards no amount of measuring of performance of their learners will bring about improvement in the quality of their results. Both Fuhrman (2003) and Darling-Hammond (2004) reach the conclusion that the internal capacity of teachers needs to be developed before they can meet external accountability demands. Quality improvement occurs when internal accountability (the internal capacity of teachers to deliver quality thereby being able to meet external accountability demands) and external accountability systems are in alignment (Fuhrman, 1999: 7, 8).

Fuhrman (2003) concludes her critique of accountability systems by saying that "accountability systems send a signal ... they do not in themselves provide the capacity necessary for students and schools to respond constructively" (p. 7).

Spillane (2005) identifies teacher capacity and the other matters that are identified above but then goes on to emphasise the importance of the reform initiative making sense to teachers. He states that the teachers are not able to carry out the reforms[39] (p. 2) because they lack the deep

[37] "We can produce many examples of how educational practice could look different, but we can produce few, if any, examples of large numbers of teachers engaging in these practices in large scale institutions designed to deliver education to most children" (Elmore, 1995: 1, in Fullan, 2001: 5); "Essentially, only about ten percent of the schools have been able to generate initiatives that substantively changed the curricular, instructional, or technological dimensions of the school" (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1292, 1293).
[38] Fuhrman, 2003: 6, 7.
[39] A shift from minimum skills in mathematics and science to more intellectually challenging content, Michigan State, USA.

WitsETD

training to do so. They found that teachers tend to support reform superficially on things like student groupings in the classroom (p. 6). Where there is greater success, however, it is because more time, staff and material resources are spent on developing a deeper understanding of the new standards. Spillane terms this "sense making" (p. 6).

Researchers in the South African context conclude that reforms cannot succeed: if the culture of the school is ignored (Jansen and Taylor, 2003;[40] Soudien, 2007; Kallaway, 1997;[41]); if old stubborn practices, specifically, Soudien's (2007) "'A' factor", dominate the culture of schools and retard the impact of reform strategies (p. 191);[42] if there is not enough focus on pedagogy and actual learning processes (Soudien, 2007; Kallaway , 1997;[43] Motala, 2001[44]); if teachers are expected to implement equally the overwhelming number of new policies at the same time and cope with the other complexities and inequalities of the education landscape (Jansen and Christie, 1999; Jansen, 2004); if the system is also not capable of ensuring, monitoring and supporting the implementation of all these policies (simultaneously and with consistency and purpose) (Jansen and Christie, 1999; Jansen, 2004);[45] if there is insufficient focus on equity

[40] Jansen and Taylor (2003) identify a wide gap between policy and practice (pp. 8-13) which is not unexpected as international research has highlighted the fact that mandated change even when it is positive often fails when the culture and context of schools where it is to be implemented are ignored (Motala, 2001: 13).

[41] Soudien (2007) agrees that teachers, textbooks and time are significant but he does not agree with Crouch and Mabogoane's (2001) suggestion that education management problems, an apartheid legacy, can be sorted out, divorced from its historical roots. He believes these problems are deeper than "managerial malaises". Social issues operating both in and outside the school need to be identified and analysed before it will be possible to understand learner achievement issues.

[42] The culture in the majority of South African schools is characterised by "deep reproductive anti-authority and anti-regulation dispositions of everybody in the school" (p. 191). Kallaway (1997), referred to in Motala (2001), like Soudien (2007), attributes this failure to the lack of attention to or acknowledgement of the "'intractable embeddedness' of apartheid's social, cultural and class structures" that mediate the implementation of policies aimed at achieving equity and quality.

[43] Soudien argues for a teaching and learning-centred approach to reform. He supports the UNESCO (2004b) broad framework that focuses policy interventions on the classroom, for example, a focus on teaching and learning outcomes; appropriate goals and relevant content, values as well as skills, sufficient and effective instructional time; structured teaching in child-centred classrooms; assessments for learning improvement. In addition the UNESCO framework addresses the learning environment which needs to be safe, organised and resourced with good learning materials that are used well by teachers who experience strong professional support (Bloch, 2005: 15, quoted by Soudien, 2007: 190).

[44] Reform efforts have focused on form and structure, for example, legislative and regulatory frameworks aimed at systems, rather than on pedagogy and actual teaching and learning processes (Motala, 2001: 63).

[45] Jansen has been consistently critical of many policies, for example: OBE (Jansen and Christie, 1999) and accountability policy (Jansen, 2004).

WitsETD

(Motala, 2001);[46] and if there is no comprehensive policy approach that recognises the "interdependencies of the various levels of achievement production" (Soudien, 2007: 192).[47]

The description, comparison and critique of the operationalisation of quality through school reform approaches internationally and in South Africa provided in Table 1, pp. 33-35, show that reform approaches have given rise to forms of teacher regulation and modes of accountability that regulate and control teachers and their work while still not bringing about significant and sustainable quality improvement. In addition, as Table 2, pp. 40-43, and Table 3, pp. 55-57, will show further, the reform approaches and accountability modes have had an impact on teacher professionalism, giving rise to tension between autonomy and compliance with external accountability demands, and extending the role of teachers and intensifying their work. It is important therefore for South Africa to learn lessons from these experiences and to identify the form of regulation of teachers' work/accountability mode that research shows is more effective for quality improvement.

Muller and Roberts (2000) identify issues for serious attention by South African policy planners. They argue that South Africa requires outcome benchmarks other than the Senior Certificate Examination. Information about the entire system is needed to discern the effects of managerial processes and other inputs (*ibid*: 31). Muller and Roberts advocate the need for gathering sufficient hard evidence about the effectiveness of each school so that appropriate interventions can be applied. If this is not done resources are wasted because of the common practice in South Africa of using "one size fits all" strategies[48] and they have the further consequence of demoralising the schools and teachers (*ibid*: 31). Calhoun and Joyce (1998), on the other hand, emphasise that the teachers' "values-set" is a crucial factor that will influence whether the reform will succeed or not. They describe this as a strong internal accountability system where "teachers accept the responsibility for implementing a reform by themselves" (*ibid*: 1290). A high level of "internalised professionalism" is needed (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 33) which they acknowledge is not widely evident in South Africa. This explains the ineffectiveness of many of South Africa's policy reforms and their implementation strategies such as the "cascade model of teaching". Interventions have to be targeted at "instructional

[46] Motala (2001) argues that reform that leads to redressing inequalities has to be linked not only to physical and infrastructural reform and inputs but also to creating conditions for equity of learning achievement. This means more attention must be given to improving pedagogical practice (p. 74) as well as problems at other levels such as the "administrative bureaucracy, the way the school operates and the restructuring of social services around the school" (Soudien, 2007: 192).

[47] The "full gamut of stakeholders with an interest in achievement, from the international agency to the parents" must be involved in a brand new comprehensive policy approach (Soudien, 2007: 192).

[48] An "education improvement system" should be targeted at schools that have common features in terms of learner achievement (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 31).

WitsETD

capacity" (*ibid*: 33). To sum up both "inside-out" and "outside-in" interventions are needed to improve quality in South Africa. Change and improvement is more likely to occur if there is accountability for achievement outputs but only if in-school and especially classroom level strategies are also applied.

2.1.7 The operationalisation of quality in key policies, evaluation projects, improvement projects and cross-national tests

2.1.7.1 Introduction to Table 2

In Table 2 (overleaf) I describe and compare how quality problems in South Africa are addressed in key policies, evaluation and improvement projects and cross-national tests. I have again chosen to present the information in tabular format to enable the reader to gain a compact overview of the impact on teachers of the numerous initiatives aimed at bringing about quality improvements. I pay particular attention to the tensions that arise for teachers because of the approach to quality improvement. Focusing on the impact these policies, projects and tests have on teachers, I examine what is expected of teachers, whether teachers accept these responsibilities (including expansion of their roles and increased demands on their time), how teachers are supported and developed to deliver the new curriculum, and how they are monitored. Most importantly, I examine the effect of all of this on their sense of professionalism and the relationship between autonomy and control in the exercise of their work. The different aspects of the policies, projects and tests are described horizontally and the comparisons between them are read vertically. See Table 2 overleaf.

2.1.7.2 Table 2 summary and conclusions

South Africa has attempted to improve quality by means of systemic reforms such as the NCS, through evaluating performance of teachers (IQMS/DAS), the school (WSE) and the system (SE 2003; SE 2006; TIMSS, SACMEQII) and targeted improvement projects (QLP; DINALEDI). In addition, research has also been conducted to find out what schools that are demonstrating quality are doing (for example, Chistie *et al*.'s (2007) *Schools that Work*). Each of these "strategies" and the approaches they employ has created tensions for teachers and impacted on their experience of professionalism. It becomes apparent that teachers are assigned responsibility for improving quality and that they are expected to accept new and extended roles in order to do this. However, as the analysis in Table 2 shows, in almost all cases teachers do not have the capacity to do what is required and negative contextual factors add further difficulty.

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Teachers receive limited support to rectify these problems but, on the other hand, they experience a high level of monitoring and control of their work. In the *Schools that work* study, Christie *et al*. (2007) found that the schools that are achieving quality have teachers with capacity (a high level of professionalism) who contribute to the schools' high level of internal accountability and for that reason the schools are able to meet external accountability demands. Where the QLP and Dinaledi schools have been successful in achieving quality improvements it is because they receive support along with the monitoring and control. Table 2 leads to the conclusion that for improvement "strategies" to be effective it is necessary to focus on building teacher capacity and internal accountability so that teachers can experience a better balance between autonomy and control.

The improvement "strategies" described in Table 2 have created particular tensions for South African teachers. The NCS, for example, envisages a different type of teacher from that expected in the past. Jansen (2003a) attributes the (professional) identity dilemma that teachers have in South Africa today to the autocratic apartheid state and its education policy. Under this system teachers were trained to be state operatives with little autonomy. Their responsibility was to comply with bureaucratic and political instructions. This attitude was reinforced through the nature of teacher education which was premised on fundamental pedagogy, a philosophy which promoted passiveness and obedience to authority (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999, in Wits EPU, 2005: 16). School inspections, "a rigid syllabus outlining, official objectives, content and method" and hierarchical control were some of the means of forcing compliance.

This compliant identity contrasts with the identity that post-democracy education policy envisages and requires of teachers. Teachers were to be the "liberators" of the classroom, setting learners free and transforming the curriculum, an identity developed in the protest years of the 1970s and 1980s (*ibid*: 121). Teachers had limited opportunity to use professional judgment because everything was rigidly prescribed resulting in teachers who had no confidence in themselves. The ever-present external accountability machinery undermined autonomy, a recognised essential tenet of professionalism.

The Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE)[70] conceptualises teachers as highly skilled and knowledgeable, independent yet accountable professionals with the space to exercise professional judgment. This "sophisticated image" of a teacher conceptualising and executing

[70] National Education Policy Act, 1996; Government Gazette, 414 (20844), February 2000.

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more complex work, however, does not match the realities of the existing teaching corps (Wits EPU, 2005: 20, 21). The apartheid policy has resulted in teachers who do not have the necessary knowledge and skills. Years of dependency and bureaucratic control have not equipped teachers to have the autonomous and confident identity necessary for this conception of professionalism. Jansen (2003a) criticises education policy documents because they all contain "powerful images of the idealised teacher" which are conveyed "through drastic role changes for the teacher without addressing the practitioner directly" (p. 119). In addition, Jansen believes that these "'policy images' of teachers make demands that conflict with their 'personal identities' as practitioners" (*ibid*: 118). While the intention of the policy is to re-professionalise teachers, the effect has been to de-professionalise as teachers feel over-burdened by the new demands for which they have neither the qualifications nor the support, leaving them overworked and demoralised.

As shown in Table 2 for quality improvement strategies to succeed there needs to be a balance between autonomy and accountability and alignment between internal and external accountability. In the next section the impact that school reforms have had on teacher professionalism is explored with particular emphasis on the autonomy versus accountability tension that is noted both in the analysis of approaches to quality (Table 1) and in the analysis of South African reform processes (Table 2). The competing conceptions of professionalism and accountability that emerge are assessed to determine which ones offer the best prospects for improving the quality of education for all learners in all schools. However, before exploring the concept of "teacher professionalism" it is necessary to have an understanding of the concept "profession" and then to have a brief look at traditional understandings of what is implied in the concept of the "teaching profession".

2.2 TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM, SCHOOL REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In an OECD meeting Carnoy is quoted as saying:

> … improving educational quality has become a widespread priority and in this the role of teachers is pivotal … Successful reform is realised by and through them. (OECD, 1992: 79)

Carnoy's emphasis on the centrality of teachers is consistent with Fullan and Hargreaves's (1992) emphasis that reforms aimed at improving quality have failed repeatedly because they have either "ignored teachers or over-simplified what teaching is about". Valuing what teachers do and supporting them has an impact on the success of reforms.

WitsETD

Carnoy's claim is aided by the following comments by three researchers: Noguera (2005) who says: "It takes more than pressure to help struggling schools"; Soudien (2007) who says: "To think that the entire quality problem can be solved by teachers taking more responsibility and being held accountable is wrong" (p. 191) and Muller and Roberts (2000) who see the classroom as "an embedded nest of systems including the school, the school support environment, the district, the province, the national department" (pp. 1, 2). These ideas suggest that teachers' role or their professionalism is a central construct in the intellectual pursuit of quality and requires clarification. Teachers' professionalism has been shown to play a pivotal role in bringing about successful quality improvement reforms (Carnoy, OECD, 1992: 79; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Carnoy, 1999).

Teachers are the implementers of policy and can create or close the gap between what (good/quality-improving) policy intends and what actually happens. At stake in operationalisation of quality is the sought after balance between deeply held tenets of professionalism such as autonomy and increasing and changing forms of control which emanate from current measures of accountability.

The rest of this chapter is organised in the following way: competing conceptions of professionalism and accountability are analysed and evaluated to determine which one offers the best prospects for improving the quality of education for all learners in all schools. The focus is on the tension teachers experience between autonomy and control and the impact this has on their sense of professionalism and by implication on their role in quality improvement. I begin the exploration of teacher professionalism by looking at the concept of "profession", in particular at what is implied in the concept "teaching profession". The chapter concludes with three conceptual claims which provide the framework for this study.

2.2.1 Conceptions of a profession

There is no recognised definition of a "profession". Kelly (1995) observes that the noun "profession" has an ambiguous history four centuries long. Originally it denoted the "occupations of university-educated men, specifically men of high social standing and limited to the 'learned professions' of medicine, law and divinity" (*ibid*: 2). The term "profession" began to be used for a wide range of occupations from priest to prostitute. The ambiguity continues when "professional" is used as an adjective because it can be both positive and negative as in "professional athlete" originally a negative descriptor because of the association with monetary reward. "Professional" can also be used in a disparaging sense, connoting bad taste, for example "professional partygoer" (*ibid*: 2). In due course "professional" began to

WitsETD

imply a practised, accomplished expert as opposed to "amateur" which implied a dabbler, lacking in refined skills (*ibid*: 2).

There are numerous lists of characteristics offered by way of conceptualising a profession. Hoyle and John's (1995) "traits model" was the prominent conception of the teaching profession until the 1970s and there is still general acceptance of most of the traits which include:

- A unique, definite and essential service
- An emphasis on intellectual techniques in performing this service
- A long period of specialised training
- A broad range of autonomy for both the individual practitioner and for the occupational group as a whole
- An acceptance by a practitioner of broad personal responsibilities for judgments made and acts performed within the scope of professional autonomy
- Emphasis on service rather than economic gain
- Self-governing organisation (Hoyle and John, 1995: 4).

Burbules and Densmore (1991) in "The limits of making teaching a profession" identify the following features of professions:

> Professional autonomy: a clearly defined, highly developed, specialised, and theoretical knowledge base; control of training, certification, and licensing of new entrants; self-governing and self-policing authority, especially with regard to professional ethics; and a commitment to public service. (Harvey, 2004)

The similarities on the lists can be categorised into five basic aspects of a profession: a specific body of knowledge[71], the ideal of service[72], an ethical code[73], autonomy[74] and a distinctive culture[75] (Hart and Marshall, 1992: 2).

[71] This separates lay people from professionals because of the "mystery" the professionals possess by virtue of their lengthy specialised training which is mostly intellectual but could also have manual elements requiring a particular dexterity (Hart and Marshall, 1992: 3).
[72] This implies service to the client rather than financial self-interest, self-sacrifice (*op. cit*.: 4).
[73] The code is supposed to increase the public's trust in the professional as he or she exercises autonomous judgment. It is also a public commitment to render the service expected of a professional (*op. cit*.: 5).
[74] The freedom to exercise professional judgment on the basis of superior knowledge and to take responsibility for the decision; Self-regulation by the profession ensures that judgments of members maintain the professional standard. Only a fellow professional in the same field can judge the competence of another professional (*op. cit*.: 5, 6).

WitsETD

The idea of teaching being a profession is a contested one. Those in favour of the notion of teacher professionalism emphasise the moral and intellectual role that teachers play in society while those against it believe that the notion is self-serving (Lawn, 1996; Hoyle and John, 1995). In the next section I describe the characteristics implied in the traditional conception of a professional teacher. I follow this with a discussion of the extent to which these characteristics are evident or threatened in modern conceptions of "teacher professionalism".

2.2.2 Traditional conception of teaching as a profession

Hart and Marshall (1992) test teaching as a profession against the five aspects identified in 2.2.1 above. Whether there is a specific *body of knowledge* for teaching is open for debate. One view sees teaching knowledge as "scientifically based, law-like generalisations" emphasising the technical skills. Another view considers teaching to be practical and context specific and emphasises a range of flexible knowledge which is applied to suit the role players and context. However, there is acknowledgement that teaching is complex and multi-dimensional and therefore requires a range of knowledge and skills including subject matter knowledge, pedagogy and the relations between them (Shulman, 1987: *ibid*: 8-10).[76] A thorough professional training is required in all these aspects as well as clinical knowledge usually gained by observing experienced professionals in the classroom, learning how to put theory into practice (Hart and Marshall, 1992: 11).

Teaching in some places has been perceived to lack *the ideal of service* to clients as teachers have become more unionised. Actions such as strikes heighten the tension between teachers and the public as they are often perceived to be in contrast to the idea of service. Linked to the ideal of service is the moral obligation aspect of professionalism: "Professionals are obligated to do whatever is best for the client, not what is easiest, most expedient, or even what the client might want" (Darling-Hammond, 1989: 15-16). This implies that teachers have to ensure that their practices and behaviours are in the learners' best interest.

In more recent years, the 1990s onwards, many countries have established professional councils with various mandates but including the drawing up and monitoring adherence to a *code of ethics* for the profession. In South Africa the first Council for Educators was established in 1996 with legislative refinements enacted in 2000.

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[75] The professions own shared norms, values and symbols which are transmitted to new entrants to the profession by rigorous and lengthy professional preparation. Those who survive become members of the "club" (*op. cit.*: 6, 7).

[76] Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is also recognised as necessary (Shulman, 1987).

WitsETD

It is the *autonomy* aspect of a profession that is most under threat and undermines teachers' call for teaching to be recognised as a profession. According to McPeck and Sanders, in Hart and Marshall (1992), autonomy refers to "the freedom and ability to implement the theoretical know-how one has learned in [one's] years of training prior to entry into the profession" (p. 22). Nevertheless, teaching is a public enterprise financed by the state and most teachers are employees of the state. Consequently, the state and the public believe they have the right to determine what teachers do. Many teaching decisions are made at levels far removed from the teachers and not always by people with a sound knowledge of education, such as the state legislators (Darling-Hammond, 1989; Sachs, 2001; Whitty, 2006). This reduces teachers' autonomy and causes teachers to feel deprofessionalised. This tension is discussed in greater detail in chapter 2.2.3, p. 50 below.

Lastly, teaching has a *distinctive culture*. There are norms for appropriate interactions with learners, colleagues, the principal, and education officials. Some norms are problematic such as the "norm of silence" in order not to appear a failure (by asking for help or mentioning problems) or not to seem too presumptuous (by contributing ideas and making suggestions). There are rituals which become routine such as attendance-checking, assemblies and staff meetings.

Expressed simply, as Hart and Marshall show, there is general agreement that autonomy, the ideal of service, knowledge and professional ethics are central features of teacher professionalism (Wits EPU, 2005: 11). It is teachers' knowledge which gives them the right to conduct their work in an autonomous manner. Professional autonomy is not a reckless, self-interested exercise of autonomy but rather it is such that it serves the needs of the client. Professionalism implies a conception of autonomy that embodies accountability[77] and which ensures that professional work of the highest quality is performed in strict adherence to a code of professional ethics.

Society grants autonomy to a profession when it is confident in the level of professional education, licensing and peer review system of that profession which are mechanisms for ensuring quality delivery of the professional service. Darling-Hammond (1989) argues that teaching is not at present considered a profession because it has not yet fully developed these

[77] A very specific kind of accountability is meant: a professional takes responsibility for his or her judgments made and actions taken when exercising professional autonomy. It does not imply being responsible for things outside his or her control. It does imply taking responsibility for giving the best professional service to the client to the extent that it is within the range of his autonomous professional judgment to do so. "Their autonomy also entails a certain responsibility and the need for professional ethics" (Englund, in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 76).

WitsETD

aspects. In order to ensure that teachers deliver a quality service some form of control over their work is required. In Darling-Hammond's opinion professional accountability aims at ensuring practitioners have the competences to deserve public confidence and consequently do not need to be externally regulated. From her analysis the question of control and autonomy resolves as follows: the greater the level of internal regulation that the teachers demonstrate, the greater the degree of autonomy (freedom from external control) is.

2.2.3 The autonomy versus accountability tension in conceptions of professionalism

There is general agreement that a conception of professionalism includes autonomy. However, professional autonomy does not imply absolute freedom and independence of any form of control. Hoyle and John (1995) describe professional autonomy simply as "the relative freedom enjoyed by practitioners in making and implementing choices regarding their professional practice". It is "constrained" autonomy: "Practitioners do not have licence, but have *a* licence" which is based on "demonstrated competence and is conditional" (p. 78). Bailey also emphasises that an autonomous professional is not a "loose cannon":

> … an autonomous teacher is not anomic, not ungoverned. To claim to be autonomous is to claim to *be governed* in a special kind of way. An autonomous teacher does not ignore the wishes and interests of others – parents, pupils, governments, employers – but such a teacher does deserve the right to consider such wishes and interests in the light of appropriate criteria. The wants and wishes cannot be simply taken as given starting points. (Cited in Morrow, 1989: 5)

From this it can be seen that teachers are responsible (accountable) to others for the performance of their work in relation to understood criteria. Teaching is in reality a guided activity. Sachs (2001) suggests that "old" professionalism included the notions of both accountability and autonomy: "responsibility and professionality go hand in hand" (p. 8) and Brint (1994) explains:

> … professionalism has both a technical and moral aspect. Technically, it promised competent performance of skilled work involving the application of broad and complex knowledge, the acquisition which required formal academic study. Morally, it promised to be guided by the application of the important social ends it served. (*ibid*: 7, in Sachs, 2001: 8)

When teachers feel they are being externally controlled or regulated and are unable to make autonomous decisions, based on their professional knowledge and in the context of the criteria which directs their work, they experience accountability as in opposition to autonomy. Gutman (1987) speaks of "ossification of office" which arises when autonomy is less than

accountability and "insolence of office" which occurs when autonomy is greater than accountability (in Wits EPU, 2005: 10). The first occurs when teachers' work is controlled to the extent that they cannot make pedagogical decisions or exercise creativity. This leads to deprofessionalisation. The second occurs when a profession has too much power such that it is not accountable to the public and it can lead to professionals not taking responsibility and, through self-serving professional councils, even protecting irresponsible professionals from being accountable to the public (Hoyle and John, 1995: 9).

2.2.4 The dilemma of setting professional standards and its impact on the autonomy versus accountability tension

The discussion above has shown that autonomy and accountability need not be in opposition because professional autonomy includes the understanding of responsibility for upholding standards in the sense of a combination of "complex knowledge" and being guided by "social ends" (Brint, 1994, in Sachs, 2001:8). In the pursuit of improving quality there has been a drive to improve the quality (standards) of what teachers do, or their "professionalism",[78] and improving the status of teachers, or their professionalisation.[79] In postmodern times enhanced status for the profession, that is, professionalisation, is often offered by the state to entice teachers to display more professionalism. Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) argue that it may be said that teachers' work is actually being re-professionalised because it covers a wider range of responsibilities, is more complex, demands the exercise of wise judgment and involves teachers in decision-making with colleagues. Other aspects of teachers' work point to de-professionalising: training is more functional, individual discretion is limited because so much of the work is prescribed (*ibid*: 3). Hargreaves (2000) cautions that stronger professionalisation could come at the cost of enhanced professionalism (p. 152).

When the professional standards of teachers are imposed by governments they serve as a regulatory framework for bureaucratic control over teachers, and are used for measuring

[78] Professionalism refers to the quality of the work of teachers, their conduct and the standards that guide them. It is a "pedagogical process" that focuses on the "internal quality of teaching as a profession", and the "components of teaching as practice", in other words, the desired practices, capacities, qualifications and competencies of professional teachers (Englund, 1996: 75-77). This is about *being professional*. Lawn (1996) states that "professionalism is such an affirmative word, with so many good associations, that it appears to be beyond critique" (p. 21). However, he argues that after decades of reforms it is possible to see how professionalism has been used as a "controlling and useful myth" (*ibid*: 21). Darling-Hammond stresses that "professionalism is not an end-state for an occupation; rather it is a continual process of reaching for useful forms of accountability" (1997: 299). Attempts to improve the standards and quality of practice address the professionalism of teachers.

[79] *Professionalisation*, on the other hand, refers to the status of teachers in the eyes of others, the regard with which they are treated and the levels of their financial compensation, "professional reward". This is about *being a professional* (Hargreaves, 2000: 152). Englund (1996) describes professionalisation as "the measure of the societal strength and authority of an occupational group" (p. 76). Moves to improve the status and standing of teachers address the professionalisation of teaching.

WitsETD

efficiency and effectiveness of systems, institutions and individuals (Sachs, 2001: 3). On the other hand, when developed and monitored by the profession itself professional standards can be a means "for teachers to gain control over what constitutes professional work" and to promote teacher development and enhanced professionalism (Darling-Hammond, 1999, in Sachs, 2001: 3). When the state emphasises procedures (of a routine and technical nature) rather than the professional judgment of teachers to meet the demands of their different contexts, standards take control from teachers and reduce their autonomy (*ibid*: 4, 5). They deprofessionalise teachers' work. Another serious consequence of the imposition (or even if agreed to by the profession) of teacher professional standards is that they are imposed on top of teachers' already heavy workload. Sachs concludes that the unintended consequences of teacher professional standards could be the control of teachers' work and de-professionalisation of teaching (*ibid*: 5, 6).

Labaree (1992) argues that the consequences of a bureaucratic regulation of teacher professionalisation is that teaching becomes:

> more technically proficient according to scientifically established criteria for accepted professional practice. In this sense then professionalisation could achieve a degree of procedural control over classroom instruction that bureaucratic managers have long sought but chronically failed to attain. (p. 147)

The question is who would benefit from increased professionalisation. Depending on the conception of a profession used it could either serve teachers to the detriment of clients or it could serve employers to the detriment of teachers and probably the clients as well. It is important therefore to examine how reform efforts, in the name of improving the quality of learner achievement, have impacted on teachers' understanding and experience of their professional status and professionalism, particularly with respect to the extent they experience autonomy or external control of their work.

This study examines the conception quality teachers have in times of enhanced accountability, how teachers experience *being professional* and the extent to which they experience professionalisation or de-professionalisation of their work, how they experience *being a professional*, and the ways in which this experience affects their professional identity and their beliefs about quality.

In the next section of this report the impact of school reform innovations and strategies on teacher professionalism is discussed. In particular, the tension between autonomy and

WCED

accountability is explored to discover how it affects teachers' experience *of being professional* and *being a professional.*

2.2.5 Conceptions of teacher professionalism: the autonomy versus accountability tension emerging from school reform innovations and strategies

While there is broad agreement about the essential tenets of a "profession" there is no commonly agreed conception of "teacher professionalism". To assist in the exploration of the impact the various school reforms have had on teacher professionalism, it is necessary to obtain an understanding of this concept.

2.2.5.1 Introduction to Table 3

In Table 3 (overleaf), using Hargreaves's (2000) conceptualisation of the development of teacher professionalism ("Four Ages of Professionalism and Professional Learning") as the starting point, I describe briefly the ages of professionalism and the type of professionalism that emerges in each age. I then link each of these ages and types of professionalism with the predominant approach to school reform and the resulting accountability model that operated in each age (see Table 1 for the detail). In this table I focus on the impact of the reform and accountability type of each age of professionalism on teachers. I explore the extent to which teachers are supported and monitored as they perform their work. Of particular importance for the study is the extent to which teachers experienced autonomy or external control and how this affected their role and their ability to bring about quality improvement. Finally, I evaluate the suitability of the reform approach in each age of professionalism for promoting and sustaining quality improvement. The different aspects of each age are described horizontally while the comparisons can be drawn by reading the columns vertically. The last column on the right of the table provides a critique and conclusion about each age of professionalism. By providing an analysis of the type of professionalism, corresponding approach to reform and its impact on teachers, I try to discover what conception of professionalism and resulting accountability mode supports and regulates teachers' work in a manner that respects the professionalism of teachers and at the same time is effective in promoting and sustaining quality improvement.

The table commences with Hargreaves's (2000) second age, the "autonomous professional because the first age which he terms the "pre-professional age", which persisted until the 1960s, [80] is not relevant to the focus of Table 3. In this age teaching was "managerially

[80] This pre-1960s view of professionalism persists today in some places and is common amongst late career teachers and even government officials who have responsibility for education. The danger of this is that teachers

WisERD

demanding but technically simple" (Hargreaves, 2000: 153-156) and hardly a form of professionalism. Hoyle (1974) termed it "restricted professionalism". A good teacher was somewhat amateurish in approach having learnt the "craft" mostly by trial and error, had a limited perspective, valued autonomy, acted in isolation, and was not involved in professional activities (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 14). No attention was given to developing professional skill and if improvement took place it was of an "individual" and "intuitive" nature and limited to the teacher in his/her individual classroom. See Table 2 overleaf.

2.2.5.2 Table 3 summary and conclusion

The analysis of the type of professionalism that emerges in response to quality improvement reforms shows that there is a relationship between the key concepts of this study: "quality" (what to improve), "accountability" (how to improve it), and "professionalism" (conception of teachers' role). The reform approaches (described in Table 1, pp. 33-35) aim ultimately at improving the quality of the educational achievement of all learners (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 3). Reforms focus on improving the quality at different levels: the education system as a whole (e.g. new curricula and systemic assessment), the school as an entity (e.g. inputs-outputs models, school effectiveness indices, standards- and performance-based criteria), and the teaching and learning process (e.g. R and D strategies standards- and performance-based reforms). How these reform approaches operationalise quality improvement has a very significant impact on teachers' professionalism.

The managerialist approach to regulating teachers and use of bureaucratic forms of accountability that the "outside-in" reforms give rise to, create tension for teachers' professionalism. Teachers experience more control than autonomy, and this is usually accompanied by very limited support in the form of professional development to assist them to deliver the desired outputs. Teachers' compliance is valued while their exercise of professional judgment is restricted. Taken further this leads to de-professionalisation, and, in extreme cases, to "post professional professionalism, a state similar to pre-professionalism" (Hargreaves, 2000).

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are viewed idealistically as self-sacrificing enthusiasts with some knowledge that they learnt by watching others. They convey this fairly successfully in an intuitive manner. Consequently investment in extended training is deemed unnecessary because teaching is considered to be easy. Time for collaboration and preparation is not needed because there is not much new once the teacher has discovered what works. All of this undermines recognition that the work and expectations of teachers and schooling today is very different from previous ages. Teaching is far more complex and requires considerable government investment in further learning opportunities for teachers and a variety of supporting resources. The fanciful notion of the self-sacrificial, idealistic teacher who is satisfied with intrinsic reward alone also prevents teachers being paid a salary worthy of their work and value to society.

WitsETD

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Bb[82]

Cc[83]

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Aa[84]

Bb[85]

Cc[86]

Dd[87]

Ee[88]

Ff[89]

WitsETD

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Aa[90]

WitsETD

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The "inside-out" reforms, on the other hand, do not regulate teachers' work but depend on their individual commitment to bring about quality improvement. Autonomy is greater than control. Neither of these approaches, however, succeeds in bringing about substantial and sustained improvement in quality (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998). The first approach is based on the faulty assumption that each externally imposed reform strategy is effective in all situations and that mere efficient management of this process leads to quality improvement. The second approach relies on the level of teachers' professionalism in the schools. While effort is made to capacitate teachers and enhance their skills and knowledge to help them implement school-based initiatives, this approach fails because teacher autonomy, without the requisite professional knowledge and skills to inform the exercise of professional judgment, is inadequate. Professional accountability is only effective when teachers have a high level of internal capacity (professionalism) (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

The merged paradigm/combined approach, a response to the failure of earlier reforms, demands improvement while at the same time it promises to support teachers to achieve these demands (Reynolds, 1998). This attempt to recognise teachers' professionalism and achieve quality improvement relies on aligning external accountability with internal accountability. However, the public expectations of "new accountability" are too high and even unrealistic. This model underestimates the amount of effort and support needed to achieve an alignment between internal and external accountability. In addition much research shows that new accountability fails to reach wide legitimacy; many teachers believe that many of the demands violate teachers' beliefs about what is educationally accountable (Elmore, 2002a; Fuhrman, 2003; Wrigley, 2003). Teachers do not experience balance between autonomy and control; tension still exists.

Cost-cutting, new roles (and expectations) for teachers, standards frameworks, prescribed curricula and new policies amongst other things have resulted in the "intensification of teachers' work" which leads to reduced time to relax in the school day, the creation of "chronic and persistent overload" and significantly, the reduction in the quality of the work caused by cutting corners in order to get jobs done (Fullan, 2001: 118, 119). Secondly, teachers do not have the time to keep up-to-date with developments in their profession. The rise in the job intensification also means that teachers do not have the time to use their professional judgment to devise creative, individualised context-specific and appropriate lessons or to plan a longer-term programme that will meet the best interest of the learners. In order to survive in these conditions teachers resort to dependency on materials produced by external agencies, regardless of their genuine educational value to their own learners.

WitsETD

The analysis in Table 2, pp. 40-43, shows that policies and reforms in South African education aimed at quality improvement generally have the intention to professionalise teachers but the resulting intensification of teachers' work and their sense of being de-skilled because of the demand for new and additional expertise have had the effect of de-professionalising them. This effect has been exacerbated by the accountability culture which remains bureaucratic and managerial. Teachers do not show trust and willingness to risk, qualities necessary in an age of change and transformation in education. As is the case elsewhere in the world, accountability demands in South Africa need to be matched with reciprocal provision of support and a stronger effort at building a professional identity which includes a sense of autonomy and confidence in their professional knowledge. South African research shows that building teacher capacity and internal accountability is the key to teachers' being able to implement strategies to bring about the transformation and quality improvement goals which the policies are striving to accomplish (Christie *et al*., 2007).

The analysis provided in Table 1, pp. 33-35, and Table 3, pp. 55-57, leads to the conclusion that for quality improvement to become sustainable and substantial the focus needs to be on building the capacity of teachers (enhancing their professionalism) to meet external demands. A teacher-centred mode of accountability that recognises the centrality of the teachers' role in quality improvement and gives due regard to developing and supporting a notion of professionalism and which allows for a balance between control and autonomy is needed. Researchers identify notions of professionalism which do this, for example: "new professionalism"/"extended professionalism" (David Hargreaves, 1994) and "postmodern professionalism" (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996). These notions have largely similar traits (described in Table 3). Essentially they recognise the centrality of teachers in any attempt to operationalise quality improvement. Notwithstanding the support for these versions of teacher professionalism, Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) consider "extended professionalism ... an admirable thing" (p. 16) but recognise that in the context of all the reform interventions it is turning into:

> a kind of distended professionalism, where teachers are stretched so far by their new responsibilities they almost tear apart with the workload and strain. (*ibid*: 17)

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) propose the notion of "interactive professionalism" which describes practices that they believe will enable teachers to cope with current accountability demands and to improve quality in the postmodern context. This is discussed further in chapter 6.3.3, p. 192).

WitsETD

2.2.5.3 Teacher resistance

In "It Takes More than Pressure to Help Struggling Schools", Noguera (2005) quoting a disillusioned teacher:

> We will fail again and then we will be an "FFF" school. The state is supposed to take over "FFF" schools but I'm not worrying about that because I'm leaving this job. I'm tired of being humiliated. We work hard here – the faculty is dedicated and gives its all, and the kids are great. They try their best and we have very few behaviour problems here. They just can't be expected to pass an exam in a language they don't understand. The worst thing about this is the state doesn't have any suggestions for what we should do differently. They're just applying the pressure, and I'm fed up with it. (p. 1)

Noguera (2005) reflects on the fact that state interventions have failed dismally. He argues that the assumption that accountability measures can work with struggling schools has only increased teacher frustration. Reform efforts are experienced as pressure (p. 2, 3). What is suggested here is a crisis of confidence, a crisis of the relationship between the state and teachers.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) allude to this breakdown too when they say that:

> Many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done *to* teachers rather than *with* them, still less *by* them. When new initiatives like active learning … are introduced, heads and other administrators speak of 'inservicing' their teachers, as if they were lowly residents in some kind of educational farmyard. Such top-down approaches to staff development embody a passive view of the teacher, who is empty, deficient, lacking in skills, needing to be filled up with new techniques and strategies (*ibid*: 26).

These approaches give insufficient attention to the core characteristics of teachers' motivation and approach to their work, specifically their store of knowledge and experience. According to Fullan (*ibid*: 26) when these factors are interfered with by external, top-down procedures teachers feel de-professionalised (deskilled) and demoralised (devalued). Teachers feel that they are being treated as *partial* teachers, rather than total teachers (*ibid*: 27). Fullan says that in many reform programmes technical skills have been emphasised while the more humane and social aspects, such as the teacher's *purpose*, the teacher as a *person*, the real *context* in which the teacher works and the *culture* of teaching have been ignored (*ibid*: 28).

If the teacher's purpose is disregarded and their work is so constrained that they have little *opportunity* to exercise their professional judgment, their professionalism and the moral principles on which it is based are undermined. Some respond by becoming resentful and

WITSETD

resistant. Bureaucratic demands that require teachers to behave in ways that conflict with what they value are unlikely to achieve quality. *Psychic rewards*, "the joys and satisfactions of caring for and working with young people" may be of greater value (Lortie, in Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 33). Reform efforts must take note of the emotional aspects of teaching. In a study of change-oriented teachers, Hargreaves (in Hargreaves *et al*.,1998) found that teachers' emotional commitment and connections to their students motivated and determined everything they did, from teaching methodologies, curriculum planning to the type of school structures they preferred. Ignoring teachers' emotions could "damage some of the fundamental aspects of what teachers do" (p. 574).

Teachers have become cynical as a result of innumerable efforts aimed at school reform, quality improvement and enhanced professionalism (Kelly, 1995: 10). Cooper (1988) says teachers have become "accustomed to being run over by hurtling bandwagons" (in Kelly, 1995: 10) and finding ways of surviving. They respond to professionalisation reforms in the same manner. They are suspicious of the motives of those who are suddenly paying an interest in strategies to promote professionalism and professionalisation. They are looking for the catch because all previous reforms have merely added to their professional burden without any corresponding rewards for teachers, intrinsic or other.

In view of these concerns, Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) state clearly that teachers must be treated as people: they are not "mere bundles of knowledge, skill and technique" (p. 36). It is essential to understand the person that the teacher is in order to understand the teacher and his or her teaching.

The aim of this study is to investigate how teachers experience their professionalism in the context of a quality regulatory framework. How do teachers in "achieving schools" experience the balance between autonomy and accountability and what effect does this have on their professional identity and how does that affect their conception of quality? The study seeks to discover the extent to which teachers believe they make decisions about their work based on accountability demands or on their autonomous professional judgment? To what extent are they autonomy-driven and to what extent are they compliance-driven? This study also examines the level of internalised professionalism of teachers and assesses the impact on teachers of external policy demands such as high stakes examinations and other interventions. To what extent are they experienced as meaningful or meaningless for the delivery of quality education? What factors do the teachers in "achieving schools" believe promote quality improvements?

WitsETD

In the next section I discuss what can be done to improve quality while at the same time respecting the professionalism of teachers. A model for improving quality emerges that is teacher-centred.

2.3 AN EMERGING MODEL OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – A TEACHER-CENTRED MODEL

The story of my research journey described in chapter 1.5, p. 16, points to what many studies and researchers (Coleman, 1966; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Carnoy, 1999; Goodson *et al*, 2006; Hargreaves and Goodson, 2006; and others) have claimed, and which is succinctly summed up by Fullan (2001): "Educational change[91] depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and complex as that" (p. 115). Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) argue that for there to be improvement in the quality of educational outcomes recognition of the centrality of the teacher, the "sharp edge", in the process, is required (in Frost and Durant, 2003: xi). Hargreaves and Goodson (2006) emphasise:

> Only when change initiatives achieve more meaningful engagement with teachers' missions and memory might we expect change to move from transient government rhetoric to sustainable school reality. (pp. 56, 57)

Frost and Durant (2003) concur: "real and lasting improvement depends on individual teachers' commitment and enthusiasm for improvement and this simply cannot be dictated from above" (p. 1). In addition, as early as 1966, the Coleman Report identifies teachers' characteristics as the most influential factor on learners achieving results better than those expected for their social class (Mayeske, 1973). The school effectiveness movement and the standards-based model have been criticised for their limited degree of sustainability and institutionalisation[92] because so much direction, control and authority is external to the individual teachers in the classrooms (Datnow, 2005: 123).

Researchers identify different factors concerning teachers that need to be given attention. Fullan (1993) argues for a "new mindset for educational change". Teachers themselves have to become "experts in the dynamics of change" and "skilled change agents with moral purpose". He emphasises that systems could not change themselves. It is the individual who plays an important role in shaping, checking and changing institutions (1993: 1-7). He identifies Eight

[91] "Change" in the discussion in this section implies change for the purpose of improving the quality of learning and learner achievement.
[92] "Sustainability" refers to longevity and "institutionalisation" refers to something becoming an established practice; the innovation becomes embedded in the structures and norms of the organisation. Organisations vary in their capacity to adapt their structures, goals and processes (Datnow, 2005: 123).

WiSETD

Basic Lessons of the New Paradigm of Change (1993: 21-22).[93] Fullan (2001) emphasises that if the individual teacher is not committed or does not understand what is required, the reform attempt/ innovation will fail (pp. 36, 37). Likewise Darling-Hammond (1997) introduces her argument based on Shulman (1983) that reforms that do not focus on teachers will not succeed in achieving quality improvement:

> The teacher remains key ... Debates over educational policy are moot if the primary agents of instruction are incapable of performing their functions well. No microcomputer will replace them ... no scripted lessons will direct and control them, no voucher system will bypass them. (p. 504, in Darling-Hammond, 1997: 293)

She sums up her argument for a focus on teachers:

> When all is said and done, what matters most for students' learning are the commitments and capacities of their teachers. ... Widespread success depends on a professionwide base of knowledge along with a commitment to the success of all students. (Darling-Hammond, 1997: 293, 294)

Elmore (2002a) argues that to accomplish improvements in learning quality means changing teachers' knowledge of content and how to teach it. Teachers need to be assisted as they would have been doing the right thing if they knew it clearly and in depth. Increased investment in teachers' knowledge, pedagogical skills and understanding of students is the starting point.

In the last section of the literature review I discuss an emerging model – a teacher-centred model of quality improvement.

2.3.1 Investment in teachers' knowledge

In the subtitle of his article: "Want to improve schools? Invest in the people who work in them", Elmore (2002b) expresses his belief that developing teachers' capacity is the only way to improve schools. He suggests a solution: 'reciprocity of accountability for capacity':

> Accountability must be a reciprocal process. For every increment of performance I demand from you, I have an equal responsibility to provide you with the capacity

[93] "Lesson One: You can't mandate what matters (The more complex the change the less you can force it); Lesson Two: Change is a journey not a blueprint (Change is non-linear, loaded with uncertainty and excitement and sometimes perverse); Lesson Three: Problems are our friends (Problems are inevitable and you can't learn without them); Lesson Four: Vision and Strategic Planning Come Later: (Premature visions and planning blind); Lesson Five: Individualism and collectivism must have equal power (There are no one-sided solutions to isolation and groupthink); Lesson Six: Neither centralisation nor decentralisation works (Both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary); Lesson Seven: Connection with the wider environment is critical for success (The best organisations learn externally as well as internally); Lesson Eight: Every person is a change agent (Change is too important to leave to the experts, personal mind set and mastery is the ultimate protection)" (Fullan 1993: 21, 22).

WiSER

> to meet that expectation. Likewise, for every investment you make in my skill and knowledge, I have a reciprocal responsibility to demonstrate some new increment in performance. ... If the public and policy makers want increased attention to academic quality and performance, the *quid pro quo* is investing in the knowledge and skill necessary to produce it. If educators want legitimacy, purpose and credibility for their work, the *quid pro quo* is learning to do their work differently and accepting a new model of accountability. (Elmore, 2002b: 3, 4)

In Fuhrman's (2003) analysis of what is necessary to improve accountability systems she identifies teacher capacity-building: "Deliberate interventions to improve teacher knowledge and skill" (p. 9). Darling-Hammond (1997), supporting this view, quotes Ferguson (1991) who believes knowledgeable teachers working in personalised settings are the most important key to learning:

> ... what the evidence here suggests most strongly is that teacher quality matters and should be a major focus of efforts to upgrade the quality of schooling. Skilled teachers are the most critical of all schooling inputs." (p. 490, in Darling-Hammond, 1997: 272)

The recommendations of Elmore (2002a, 2002b, 2003), Fuhrman (2003) and Darling-Hammond (1997) all point towards the development of the teacher and the greater professionalisation of the work that is done in schools. Their respective research shows that when teachers believe that the ability to enable every learner to learn is their personal responsibility, and when they are equipped with the necessary skill and knowledge to do so, they can achieve improved learning outcomes on a sustained basis. There are no quick fixes or emergency remediation projects that are able to accomplish this but consistent application of effective teaching and learning practices in an enabling environment are needed. When accountability measures actually reside within the person of the individual teacher, professional accountability is at work.

2.3.2 Investment in the teacher as a "total teacher"

For quality to improve, Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) urge that attention needs to be given to the teacher and the school in totality. So many reforms aimed at improved teaching practice have focused on theories of learning which have ignored the social context where the teaching actually happens. However, the serious consequences of this cannot be disregarded because of the damaging effect on teachers and the teaching profession.

> The price of ignoring the context of teaching in this way is failed idealism in efforts and improvement, guilt and frustration among teachers who cannot meet the standards set for them, criticism of teachers who fail to make the changes expected

WiSER

> of them, and erratic leaping from one innovation bandwagon to the next. (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 49)

It is clear that a way to recognise teachers' purpose, passion and the context in which they work is essential for change aimed at quality improvement to take hold and flourish. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) identify a particular type of teaching culture that could provide the context for this to occur. They describe in detail "*total schools*" which "value, develop and support the judgement and expertise of *all* their teachers in the common quest for improvement" (p. 50). From these schools "*total teachers*" are likely to emanate and succeed.

> *Total teachers*[94], we propose, are most likely to emerge, develop and prosper in *total schools*, in schools which value, develop and support the judgment and expertise of *all* their teachers in the common quest for improvement. (p. 50)

The writers argue that the teaching culture of schools needs to be explored because people develop and change in response to elements within a culture. If a reform requires change in a teacher, then change in the teacher's person is need. To accomplish this, the culture in which the person is to develop must be supportive of the qualities to be promoted. Teachers require an empowering professional environment, one that promotes their agency.

2.3.3 Re-organisation of teachers' work from isolation to collaboration

In *What is worth fighting for in your school* Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) identify six problems that need to be addressed in school environments:

- "Overload" has seen teachers coping with new roles and curricular complexity, which results in unrealistic expectations of teachers' work. Some of the proposed solutions and innovations have merely made the problem worse (pp. 8, 9).
- "Isolation" allowed conservative practices to continue and prevented innovation (pp. 10, 11).
- Collegiality has been proposed as a means to sustain improvement but it has led to "groupthink" or contrived collegiality which has resulted in the loss of the individual's intuitive contribution. The value of the thinking derived in solitude must not be over-looked because of the emphasis on collaborative effort (pp. 12-15).

[94] A teacher is treated as a "total teacher" if the following four aspects are addressed:
The teachers' *purpose*,
The teacher as a *person*,
The real world *context* in which teachers work,
The *culture* of teaching; the working relationships that teachers have with their colleagues (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992: 27).

WiSER

- The isolation in which the teachers practised has resulted in "Untapped competence and (neglected incompetence)", that is, excellent work has gone unnoticed and unappreciated and bad practices have remained hidden and beyond remediation (pp. 17, 18).
- In the age of continuous reform innovations, leadership (currently over-stretched and in short supply) is needed to ensure that whole schools are effective for classrooms to be effective. To replace a narrow understanding of teachers' role teacher leadership is required: each teacher being committed to contributing beyond his or her own classroom thus closing the "gap between the leader and the led" (pp. 19-21).
- Successive failed reforms have created conditions that are not favourable for mobilising teachers as a "resource for reform" (p. 22).

Solving these problems demands greater teacher sharing and genuine collaborative effort to use expertise and enable teachers to learn effectively from one another and not be engaged merely in aimless consultation and deliberation. Collegial professionalism is called for.

The form that collegiality and collaboration takes needs to be such that it leads to improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992: 60) refer to the two distinctive school cultures identified by Rosenholtz (1989): "stuck" schools where learner achievement is lower, teachers work alone and rarely ask for help and "moving" schools which are "learning enriched" and where teachers work together more and believe that learning is life-long and that giving and receiving help does not imply the incompetence of anyone. The type of collaboration that has been identified as the most likely to lead to significant improvement is what Little (1990) calls "joint work" which includes: team teaching, planning, observation, action research and mentoring. In joint work the individual is developed in an interactive and interdependent relationship. This type of effective collaborative culture is not attained quickly or easily but, when it is, it is a far more suitable quality accountability driver because it harnesses the attributes of members of "a high discretion, and high energy profession" (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 83).

Spillane (2005) terms this "sense making" (p. 6). He finds that where teachers' beliefs are consistent with the ideas embodied in the new standards and where schools and departments initiate teacher-led collaboration there is greater success as these teachers "amplified" the district's message (p. 7). In his study Spillane finds that teachers are dedicated and do want to make the changes but yet not all achieve success. He concludes by saying that it is the extent to

WitsETD

which teachers make sense of the standards in specific ways that enable them to achieve deeper changes.

> For them, sustained conversations with colleagues were central to grasping the standards. These discussions allowed teachers to exchange ideas and confirm their emerging understandings of problem solving and discourse. … Shared observations of practice and open sharing of classroom activities facilitated deeper understanding of math standards. The teachers making more superficial changes described their sense making as more solitary. … They had few opportunities to test their understandings of reform ideas. (p. 9)

Fullan (1993) sees teachers as the "experts in the dynamics of change" and "skilled change agents with moral purpose" who contribute to changing the lives of learners from all backgrounds and thereby increasing the capacity of society as a whole to cope with the change. This involves teachers being "engaged in continuous corrective analysis and action" to create a learning society. Collaboration and individualism would need to co-exist as teachers learnt new ways of working.

2.3.4 Mentoring of teachers

In his discussion on teacher effectiveness at classroom level Hargreaves compares German and Japanese Mathematics teaching to show that teaching is a "system" and that systems and their effectiveness differ from country to country. When a country tries to change its system, or an aspect of it, there may be little and slow improvement in effectiveness because teachers have been trained in particular ways and have what he terms "scripts" which are deeply rooted in them. The whole script needs to be changed. To obtain high leverage "powerful combinations of teachers' classroom practices" have to be found (p. 500). It is not enough to focus on one or two practices. Hargreaves (2001) identifies some of the high leverage practices of a more effective teaching system, for example "school-based professional development groups":

> These groups provide a context in which teachers are mentored; they also provide a laboratory for the development and testing of new teaching techniques. The teachers devise 'research lessons' which they take time to design, test out and improve – and then share and implement collectively. They observe one another at work and develop a language in which to talk about what they do. Because the outcome is owned collectively, the teachers can constructively criticise one another without causing offence. (p. 500)

Writing in the South African context, Shalem (2003) emphasises how difficult and slow the process is to gain teachers' understanding (of what it is they are to do as far as instruction and

WitsETD

assessment is concerned), willingness and preparedness to implement change in a meaningful manner.

> The core enabling factor in this kind of educational process is TRUST – trust that routine and direct observation of teachers in their classrooms will only enlarge the already existing space of interaction (between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and their school officials) around good practice and around the anxiety that always gets invoked while being-in-the-process-of-change. (p. 46)

Shalem goes further, referring to Elmore (2000) and Hargreaves (2001), and describes the ideal environment for a teacher to try new things in the process of reforming education.

> An enlarged interactive space is one in which the teacher can feel vulnerable but yet is willing to try out innovative pedagogies in the presence of a supportive other. (Shalem, 2003: 46)

2.3.5 Securing teachers' commitment to change

Honig and Hatch (2004) propose that schools "establish their own goals and strategies", use these as the "basis for deciding whether to bridge or buffer[95] external demands" and districts would "support these decision-making processes by continually searching for and using information about schools goals, strategies, and experiences to inform their own operations" (p. 26). However, for schools or teachers to make decisions to "bridge" or "buffer" they need certain capacities and enabling conditions. These are detailed by the writers (p. 22) but include factors requiring considerable development of staff. This does not, however, have to only come from an external source or be provided by the state or districts, it can be teacher led. In their book, *Teacher-Led Development Work,* Frost and Durrant (2003) present "an approach to school improvement that rests on the belief that it is teachers who are at the 'sharp edge' (of processes of development and improvement" (p. xi, citing Bascia and Hargreaves, 2000).

Frost and Durrant further state:[96]

> Whether the impetus for change springs from national reforms or from the perception of a single teacher that something could be better, improvements in teaching and learning ultimately depend on the action taken by the teachers. Of course, with 'top-down' initiatives, the compliance of teachers can be secured …

[95] Bridging entails the "organisation's selective engagement of environmental demands to inform and enhance implementation of their goals and strategies" (Honig and Hatch, 2004: 23).
Buffering does not entail the rejection of external demands without consideration but the strategic choice to "engage external demands in limited ways" (*ibid*: 23).

[96] This excerpt may sound simply like an "inside-out" approach to improvement, however, I include it because the focus is on teachers leading and taking responsibility for their professional practices, that is their professionalism or capacity.

WiSETD

> but real and lasting improvement depends on individual teachers' commitment and enthusiasm for improvement and this simply cannot be dictated from above. So, we are centrally concerned here with the capacity of individual teachers, with or without formal management responsibility, to exercise leadership and take greater responsibility for the development and improvement of professional practice. (p. 1)

McLoughlin (1987) emphasises that for improvement strategies requiring teachers to change their practice it is necessary to change both their teacher capacity and their will to do so. She believes it is the latter that is more difficult to change because it concerns motivation and beliefs (in Christie *et al*., 2007). For this reason attention needs to focus on strategies to change teachers' beliefs.

2.3.6 Align internal and external accountability

In an interview for the Harvard Graduate School of Education News about the benefits of accountability for schools, Elmore (2003) introduced the concept of internal accountability as being a strong factor in the likelihood of the school succeeding in improving the performance of all learners. He explained:

> Schools should also inspire teachers and administrators to uphold strong norms and expectations for students' academic learning. We have called this latter focus "internal accountability." Schools that have high internal accountability generally don't have problems responding to external pressure for accountability. (Bucuvalas, 2003: 2)

Elmore (2002a) emphasises that what is needed first is internal accountability. Education personnel must know what "quality" teaching and learning looks like. They must share a coherent understanding of this.

> The ability of a school to make improvements has to do with the beliefs, norms, expectations, and practices that people in the organization share, not with the kind of information they receive about their performance. Low-performing schools aren't coherent enough to respond to external demands for accountability. (p. 5)

Where there is a high level of internal accountability teachers apply "high leverage strategies" (David Hargreaves, 2001) to avoid the danger of external accountability measures resulting in the narrowing of the curriculum that teachers teach (Wrigley, 2003: 22, 23). David Hargreaves (2001) assumes that the outputs of schooling refer to the quality of the intellectual and moral life of students and describes "leverage" as the "quality and quantity of effected change on students' intellectual moral state as a function of teachers' invested energy". In other words, a high leverage strategy would result in significant desired change/improvement in return for

WitsETD

teachers' efforts, whereas a low leverage strategy would yield limited results for considerable effort. Four results evidenced in teachers are possible: "cynical tokenism" if there is low input and low quality and quantity output demand; "exhausted frustration" if there have been high levels of input from the teacher aimed at low quality and quantity outputs; "short-term effectiveness by burn-out" when high levels of teacher energy have been used to achieve high quantity and quality outputs; and "high leverage" when the energy inputs of teachers are low but they leverage high quantity and high quality outputs. Teachers in effective schools avoid low leverage strategies and apply high leverage strategies. The quality and quantity of their outputs are unusually high and are achieved by working smarter rather than harder. To obtain improvement in quality, teachers' capacity to identify and apply high leverage strategies needs to be identified (*ibid*: 489).

"Capacity" is identified as a critical factor in many reform studies. A school that "sustains its effectiveness by successfully managing change in a context of instability and reform" is assumed to have it (Hargreaves, 2001: 488). Cohen and Ball (1999) relate it to what is necessary for instructional change. For them capacity is specific and is concerned with three elements of instruction: teachers, students and the materials. Improved capacity depends on how these elements are used and influence one another (p. 27). Teacher learning must include improving their knowledge of content and the best instructional method associated with that content. Capacity improvement also requires attention to the instructional environment so often inimical to improvement. Resources that support improvement include aspects related to the professional nature of teachers' work:

> … a shared language of professional discourse, professional socialisation leading to shared norms and standards of work, traditions of common work on teaching and learning, social and economic support for demanding instruction, and professional norms and incentives that support improvement. (*ibid*: 28)

Put differently, before accountability can be demanded, teacher and school capacity has to be developed. This is what Elmore (2002b: 3) describes as "reciprocity of accountability for capacity". Taylor (2001) speaks of the need for "demand-pull" (external accountability measures) and "supply-push" (capacity-building) factors. The ability of schools to make improvements depends on "the beliefs, norms, expectations, and practices that people in the organisation share" (*ibid*: 5). It is these factors that determine the teacher's and school's level of internal accountability. Elmore believes that teachers and schools that have high internal

WitsETD

accountability are generally able to respond to external accountability demands (as reported by Bucuvalas, 2003: 2). The reverse is true as well.

By identifying causes for the failure of reforms Hopkins (1998) argues for the need to "embed school improvement within a contextual and diagnostic analysis of the school", give sufficient consideration to the impact that the reform initiatives will have at the classroom level and acknowledge that different schools are in different "growth states" or "performance levels". Hopkins classifies schools into three types needing different improvement strategies. Type I[97] II[98] and III[99]strategies devised respectively to help failing schools become moderately effective, strategies to move moderately effective schools to become effective and strategies to ensure effective schools remain so (pp. 1048-1051).

2.3.7 Conclusion

In terms of an emerging model of quality improvement which is focused on teachers, the literature suggests the following points: there needs to be investment in teachers' knowledge, investment in the "total teacher", reorganisation of teachers' work from isolation to collaboration and this should be done through a collaborative form of mentoring. Together all of these point to "internal accountability" which is the prime condition for externally-based reform to succeed.

2.4 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate how teachers experience their professionalism in the current regulatory context and what form of control (accountability) they believe could be the means for improving quality in South African schools. Three concepts: quality, professionalism and accountability and their inter-relatedness have been explored in this chapter. Because the study explores these concepts with a view to obtaining improvement in

[97] A 'failing school; a stuck school'; Strategies include: change at leadership level, provision of intensive outside support, obtain data on student achievement, focus in the short-term on things that are easy to change, focus on managing learning behaviour (i.e. create conditions within which learners learn most effectively), re-skill teachers with a specific repertoire of learning/teaching styles; restructuring to new leadership, collaboration and planning opportunities; withdraw external pressure to remove fear and give space to grow (Hopkins *et al*., 1997: 404-406).
[98] A 'low achieving' school; Strategies aim at refining developmental priorities, focus on teaching and learning issues and build capacity within the school to support the work, some external support but these schools can theoretically improve themselves (Hopkins *et al*., 1997: 406-408).
[99] The 'good or effective school' focuses on remaining a 'moving school' and continues to enhance learner performance using strategies such as the following: articulate values, clearly raise expectations and create an achievement orientation; involve and empower learners in the process of learning; use restructuring to create collaborative planning at department and classroom level; engage long-term outside support focused on developing leadership skills, team building and models of teaching and learning; generate a common language around learning and achievement; give teachers 'space' to experiment; celebrate and share success; (Hopkins *et al*., 1997: 408, 409).

WisERD

the quality of education delivered, attention is given to the impact of the increasing accountability demands of the various school improvement reforms on teachers' professional identity and in turn their conceptions of quality. From this exploration I identify three conceptual claims which provide the framework for this research study. The data is collected and described, and the findings are analysed and discussed in terms of the claims of this framework.

- Teachers thrive on a vibrant professional identity and their conception of quality is mediated by their experiences of professionalism.
- External and internal accountability need to be aligned for quality improvement reforms to succeed and be sustainable.
- Teacher regulation is necessary for quality improvement, but it requires conditions that recognise the value of teacher leadership.

2.5 SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter I have shown that while enormous attention has been given to improving the "quality" of education outcomes internationally and in South Africa, there is, in fact, no agreed understanding of the notion of "quality". Nevertheless, I have described features of quality and approaches to quality in the four education traditions. I then discussed the operationalisation of "quality" through the various school reform approaches pointing out the impact of the reform approaches on the regulation of teachers and their work and evaluating the extent of their effectiveness for enabling quality improvement. I examined the approach to quality improvement in key policies, projects and research in South Africa again focusing on tensions that arise for teachers because of the approach to quality improvement, the view of teacher responsibility and forms of teacher regulation. The next section of this chapter focused on conceptions of professionalism with particular reference to the tension teachers experience between autonomy and control that arose as a result of school quality improvement reforms and their corresponding forms of teacher regulation. I evaluated how suitable each type of professionalism and form of regulation was for achieving quality improvement.

The third section identified the central role that teachers play in effecting improvements that are successful and sustainable. It emphasised the research finding that placing pressure on teachers in the form of external accountability demands does not produce quality improvement unless there is a reciprocal degree of support for teachers. A model of accountability that

WITSETD

recognises the aspirations of teachers and satisfies the requirements of broader society is likely to be more effective for improving quality. A teacher-centred model of quality improvement emerges. The capacity of teachers has to be developed to enable them to do what is necessary for improvement. The greater the teachers' and their schools' capacity, and therefore their internal accountability, the more likely those teachers will be able to take the necessary steps to bring about change.

It is acknowledged that the teacher in the classroom is embedded in a larger context of the school and broader society therefore the impact of factors that are external to the teacher needs to be recognised. I pointed out that while the professionalism of teachers in South Africa is subject to the same forces and effects as those identified in international research, the particular contextual factors arising from the legacy of apartheid that impact on teachers in this country cannot be overlooked.

This chapter concludes by identifying three conceptual claims which provide the framework for the study. In chapter 3 I show how the conceptual framework assisted me in collecting the data for the study and how the structure used to describe and analyse the findings relies on this conceptual framework.

WitsETD

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESTATING THE PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE STUDY

In chapter 1, I explained that despite substantial government investment in improving the quality of education in the country (for example, the very large slice of the national budget being devoted to education; national and provincial policies that provide the framework for improved quality) there have not been the desired returns (Taylor, 2001; Taylor and Moyana, 2005). I also showed that centralisation of teacher regulation has proven largely futile in achieving quality improvements (Taylor, 2006; Soudien, 2007) but has had the unintended consequences of constraining teacher professionalism (De Clercq, 2007a, b, c), intensifying their work and damaging teacher morale (Chisholm *et al*., 2005; Peltzer *et al*., 2005). My concern about these consequences prompted this research. Not only are the accountability measures not bringing about improvement but they are also damaging the profession. This suggests that there has been a failure to listen to the voice of teachers who should have a say in identifying what quality is and how to achieve it.

In this study I aim to investigate how teachers working in "achieving schools" experience these regulatory controls. The central question I explore is why teachers believe their professionalism is under attack, what they believe can improve the quality of learning outcomes in their schools and what model of teacher regulation seems to emerge from their accounts.

In the light of the above, the study addresses the following questions:

1. What is quality that is relevant, credible and legitimate for South Africa? Is it consistent with what is valued internationally?
2. What conceptions of quality do teachers in "achieving schools" value and what mode of teacher regulation seems to emerge from their accounts?
3. How do teachers in "achieving schools" experience the current accountability reforms and what can we learn from their experience about their conception of quality?

3.2 RESEARCH METHODLOGY

3.2.1 Research design overview

The research design provides the overall plan for achieving the result that the research aims to achieve (Mouton, 2001: 56). This study is an example of a qualitative case study. It uses the qualitative research paradigm. The study is an empirical one using mainly primary data. The researcher has little control over the data which is obtained from natural field settings. The

WitsETD

study aims to answer key research questions of an exploratory, descriptive and explanatory nature. It does this by investigating the phenomenon (the unit of analysis) primarily by using in-depth interviews of individuals and of focus groups. The study also uses written responses to a questionnaire and teachers' drawings in response to a prompt statement.

All research involves a research problem or research question for which research answers must be found. This is done either for pure research purposes, that is, for scholarly purposes to increase understanding for understanding's sake or for applied research purposes, that is, to increase understanding in order to apply the findings in a practical situation (Booth *et al*., 2003: 64). This study is an example of applied research as the findings will be used to shed light on current forms of teacher regulation. The research examines what do teachers in the study experience as enabling quality improvement and what do they experience as constraining in order to suggest a model of accountability, a framework for developing quality that supports and strengthens the professional capacity of teachers. This research seeks to provide a more detailed understanding of what Darling-Hammond (1989; 2004) calls a "professional model of accountability", one which foregrounds the importance of teachers' agency, specifically their internal capacity and accountability.

I hope that the findings will be used, amongst other purposes, to identify what needs to be done to improve quality in these kinds of schools, while at the same time respecting and strengthening the professionalism of teachers, and to draw the attention of policy-makers to these factors. The findings would also be linked to existing conceptual understandings, theoretical models and philosophical schools of thought on the notions of quality, accountability and professionalism.

Empirical research within the qualitative paradigm is best suited to obtaining the required evidence to answer the research question. The unit of analysis, the phenomenon to be investigated, is the lived experience of individual teachers working in "achieving schools", operating in their own classrooms and in the wider school environment. I research this phenomenon by means of a case study of the beliefs and experiences of teachers in "achieving schools". I explore and describe how they are coping with multi-pronged forms of regulation and quality assurance processes aimed at achieving accountability and quality improvement in the South African education system in order to understand their perception of quality.

WitsETD

3.2.1.1 Methodological issues

Methodology concerns the process of accomplishing the research aims: the tools, procedures, specific tasks and individual steps (Mouton, 2001: 56).

1. The literature review

The literature review is the first stage in the research process and is undertaken in order to:

- ensure that one does not duplicate a previous study;
- discover what the most recent and authoritative theorising about the subject is;
- find out what the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study are;
- identify the available instrumentation that has proven validity and reliability;
- provide the researcher with ideas which can stimulate the choice of issues to be pursued further (Mouton, 2001: 87).

2. Fieldwork

Data gathering: Identifying data sources, data collection tools and respondents (Mouton, 2001: 99):

In summary, data sources for the study are:

- School background questionnaire for completion by the principal or deputy principal of the five schools in the case study. The researcher administered it and recorded oral responses;
- Five individual interviews with five teachers from the five schools in the case study using a semi-structured interview schedule;
- Five focus groups comprising 3-9 other teachers from the five schools in the case study using the same semi-structured interview schedule;
- Self-administered questionnaire for written responses for completion by all teacher participants after the interview/focus group interview, returned one week later (21 returned);
- Visual response to prompt included in the questionnaire for completion by all teacher participants after the interview/focus group interview, returned one week later (24 returned).

WiSETD

The individual interviews and focus group interviews, the collection of the completed teachers' questionnaires, drawings and the administration of the principal/deputy principal school background questionnaires all took place between 8 August and 17 September 2007.

3.2.2 Sample selection

I derived the sample by means of "non-probability sampling" of the "purposive" or "judgmental sampling" type (Babbie, 2005: 188, 189). This type of sampling is defined as follows:

> Purposive sampling – A type of non-probability sampling in which you select the units to be observed on the basis of your own judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative. Another name for this is judgmental sampling. (Babbie 2005: 188, 189)

I chose this mode of sampling/selection because for the purpose of the study it was necessary to identify a sample of teachers who are likely to describe experiences that contribute towards quality teaching and learning.[100]

The sample of teachers I have purposively selected comprises five individual teachers from five purposively selected schools. They form the basis of the case study. In addition to the five individual teachers, five focus groups from the same five schools, comprising 3-9 teachers each, support the case study.

My intention was to use the same schools for this study as those used by The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) when it commissioned research on leadership styles and practices in effective schools (Roberts and Roach, 2005). The MGSLG study was conducted on five public secondary schools in Gauteng drawn from a range of contexts, districts and parts of Gauteng. They were selected on the basis of set criteria.[101] As the study focused on practices in schools that teachers perceive to be effective, the criteria took into account the school's academic performance as well as its social context.

[100] An assumption is made that these are "quality" teachers because they contribute to the school being an "achieving school", i.e. a school that is delivering quality education. A "quality" teacher as defined in this study is a teacher who is regarded as particularly effective in the sense that he or she achieves quality results in the context of the school. Quality teachers have facilitated improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in their schools.

[101] The identification of schools was done in the following way:
A performance score was assigned to each school, based on their performance in the grade 12 examinations in 2003. The score was a combination of the percentage of learners who passed and the percentage of those who passed with endorsement (exemption). The school's poverty ranking (as assigned by the GDE) was used as a proxy for the socio-economic status of the school and the learners attending the school. The researchers therefore adopted a "value-added" approach to assessing performance. Once the schools had been ranked in terms of socio-economic status the researchers selected the best-performing schools in different quintiles (Roberts and Roach, 2005: 9).

WitsETD

Three of the schools in the MGSLG study (Roberts and Roach 2005: 11-12) were part of my study but the other two declined to participate, one of them after the public service strike[102] had disrupted schooling and teacher harmony. I replaced them with schools identified by the Gauteng Department of Education Districts as "achieving schools" using, as far as possible, the same criteria as the MGSLG study used. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of all the schools. An outline profile of each school is provided in the Table 4 below.

The principals or SMT of the five schools identified the five individual teachers for the case study on the basis of these teachers being particularly effective in the sense that they achieve quality results in the context of the school. They also identified approximately half the participants for the five focus group interviews while the balance of teachers in the focus groups comprised volunteers. Altogether thirty-two teachers contribute to the study. All age groups were represented in almost equal numbers. (See Tables 5 and 6, pp 85 and 86 below)

3.2.2.1 Schools' sample and school background information

Prior to meeting teachers I had an interview with the principal or deputy principal of each school to gain an understanding of the contextual issues that affect the teaching environment of their school. I used a questionnaire (see Appendix 1A) which focused mainly on factual details about the school. I asked the questions orally and wrote down the answers myself so that I could follow up on responses if required. The five schools that participated in the study are presented in the table below.

Table 4 - Outline profiles of the schools

Name of school	Location	Type	Number of learners enrolled	% pass rate for Grade 12 in 2006[103]	% obtaining university endorsement in 2006
Blue Lake School (School 1)	Johannesburg	Suburban	1048	100	99
Country College (School 2)	Pretoria	Suburban	887	100	51
Tower Hill School (School 3)	Johannesburg	Inner-city	973	97 (IEB exams)	24 (IEB exams)
Red River School (School 4)	Johannesburg	Suburban focus school	520	100	97
Deep Valley School (School 5)	Randburg, Far North	Informal settlement peri-urban	600 in Secondary school section	95	Approx. 35

[102] The strike was in May and June, 2007. The interviews were conducted relatively soon thereafter in August and September.
[103] The results for 2006 are used because they were the most recent ones available at the time I selected my sample.

WitsETD

It is to be understood that principals' and deputies' responses to the more emotive questions are their subjective versions of how they see their schools. However, what is reported in these summary sketches of the schools is confirmed by what I saw and what the teachers confirmed in their interviews.

Blue Lake School (school 1), established in 1923 is a quintile 5 well-resourced school located in an established, wealthier suburb of Johannesburg. Originally a school for whites only it opened the doors to all race groups in 1991. The school prides itself on its excellent academic record (100% pass rate with 99% university endorsement), its diversity and range of opportunities. It also has a commitment to social issues and fundraises and collects for various welfare organisations.

The 1048 learners come from all the surrounding suburbs and as far as the east and west rand, Soweto and the far south. Currently its racial composition is approximately 45% white, 27% Indian, 25% African and 3% coloured. While a large percentage of white learners in the immediate suburb attend independent schools, the children (black) of local domestic workers attend in large numbers. Extra lessons are provided in key subjects such as English and mathematics, mostly computer-assisted. In the higher grades more support is given in all subjects. A one-week winter school is held in the July holidays each year for the grade 12s. Other support services are also available to help learners with personal issues.

The SGB funds an additional 25 teachers to the 35 paid by the GDE. The SGB also employs additional secretarial and maintenance staff. The school fees are high (R16 000,00) because of the high level of subsidisation of non-paying (exemption) learners. Parents range widely from the unemployed to CEOs of significant businesses. A large number are professionally qualified and they contribute their services. The deputy principal believes that the parents are supportive on the whole but most are not very involved in actual activities at the school. A small number of highly involved and supportive parents are seen as a valuable resource. The SGB is experienced as highly effective.

In the opinion of the deputy principal, the teaching context is very favourable and discipline is not an issue although some learners travel long distances to school, lack a work ethic and have very difficult home circumstances. She reports that the teachers' biggest complaint is about the heavy workload and administrative duties and poor communication from the GDE. Generally there is a high level of collegiality and support for professional development if it is of a high standard. The teachers are well-qualified with all but two out of sixty having university

WitsETD

degrees. 40% have an honours level or higher qualification. The facilities and equipment enable the teachers to do their work.

Country College (school 2) was established in 1947 to serve the poorer white suburbs on the eastern side of Pretoria. It is a quintile 3 school but is well-resourced, having benefited from the apartheid funding model. To assist with financing the running of the school a section of the school property was sold to developers of a shopping centre. The school is proud of its academic performance (100% pass and 51% university endorsement) considering the change in learner demographics, from being all white in 1990 to almost all African in 2007. It is a Dinaledi school and the school takes pride in the number of girls doing mathematics and science. The school has three computer centres and all learners have access.

There are 887 learners. The principal considers the academic preparation of the grade 8s who enter each year to be inadequate for high school. In particular, they present with poor reading and language skills. Some learners are described as disruptive. A reading programme and Master Maths are offered to the learners at no charge. The principal believes that the home situation of learners is the major factor hindering learners from improving achievement levels.

The majority of families are of the lower socio-economic levels and are not much help with fund-raising. They support the new disciplinary measures the school has introduced and generally attend meetings concerning academic matters. The SGB is experienced as supportive. The fees charged are R5 400,00 per annum and the collection rate is reasonable with a lot of effort from the school. The SGB supplements the GDE teaching staff of 30 with an additional 10 teachers. The SGB also employs additional secretarial and ground staff.

The teaching staff is a "good" mixture of beginner and experienced staff who are mentored by HODs. The principal feels it has been difficult to transform the racial composition of the staff because they have looked for the best (meaning best qualified academically all other factors being equal) person for the job. The amount of team work has been increasing and when given opportunities to attend workshops, which the principal encourages, they do attend. The school recently conducted a workshop about learner discipline. The teachers are well-qualified; most have a degree, and in the principal's opinion, they are reasonably comfortable with the NCS. The principal reports that most of the teachers' complaints concern administration work they have to do in order to prove they have done their work. Teachers have the facilities and equipment necessary to do their work.

WitsED

The third school I visited was Tower Hill (school 3) which is a Johannesburg inner-city school. The original school was one of the oldest girls' schools in Johannesburg but it was closed down and a new co-educational school opened in the premises in 1991. At first it was an independent school (the reason it still writes the IEB examinations) and then the GDE took it over. It serves the extremely diverse and moving population of the inner-city. It is quintile 4[104] school. The school inherited a very good school building, and some sports facilities. It does now struggle with maintaining them and providing additional, new teaching resources. The school prides itself on being like a family: teachers provide love and nurturing as well as investing personal energy to empower the learners, and learners like one another; it is like a community. Considering the learners' circumstances, the school is proud of its academic achievement (97% pass with 24% university endorsement, writing the IEB examinations).

The 2007 enrolment was 973. The principal experiences pressure from the Gauteng Department of Education and the community to take in more learners than they can reasonably accommodate because of the need for school places in the area. The majority of learners are African from South Africa and many other African countries. In the opinion of the principal, learners' poor language ability, poor work ethic and general bad discipline hinder their performance. The principal reports that teachers complain about learners not respecting their authority. There are a number of support programmes for the learners ranging from the academic to those concerning social welfare issues. Mathematics and science lessons are provided free every Saturday and there is a structured extra-mural timetable. They feed learners; provide a safe house which the school fund-raised for; and have a partnership with a nearby private clinic that provides medical attention for learners.

There is a high level of poverty and social problems amongst the parents. 70% are single parent families. The school experiences limited support from the parents. Only 55% collect their children's progress reports when they are handed out on a Saturday once a term. Registered letters are sent to parents to get them to come to a meeting at the school to discuss their child's problems. The SGB functions under the principal's guidance but she experiences the SGB as another "weight to drag". The principal explains that the parents are willing to serve on the SGB but they have little knowledge and limited skills to contribute and the GDE training of SGBs has been inadequate. The school charges R3 300,00 per annum with only a 40% collection rate. The principal looks for sponsors to provide the equipment and boost school

[104] They do not believe they should be in this quintile and have lodged an objection to this classification.

WitsETD

funds. The SGB manages to supplement the staff of 28 GDE paid teachers by an additional three teachers. They also manage to employ four additional support staff.

The principal reports that the teachers manage the difficult teaching context but experience the learners' poor work ethic and "paperwork" as their biggest problems. Half of the teachers have a degree but the principal believes they do not all have a complete understanding of the NCS. The school does not do a lot of staff development but teachers belong to user groups[105]. By and large there is staff unity but the public servants' strike in May and June of 2007 was disruptive for harmony. The principal believes the staff is committed to caring for their learners in a holistic sense.

The fourth school in the study, Red River School (school 4), was established in 1992 in the buildings of a former white Afrikaans primary school which had been closed because of a decline in enrolment. It is located on the outskirts of Johannesburg in a lower working-class suburb. The attractive old building has been maintained well. The original sports facilities have not been maintained: sport does not play a major role in the school programme. Learners may join the university sports clubs. It is a quintile 5[106] Dinaledi school. However, as the school was established as a "focus school"[107] for mathematics and science with seed funding from two large financial companies and the support of a nearby university, it is more financially viable than other GDE schools. The school has a trust fund from which the school draws the interest to supplement its income in order to provide extra support to learners and resources for teachers. The school is proud of its excellent academic history (100% pass and 97% university endorsement) especially because it is compulsory for learners to take Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting and Economics, subjects which are considered more academically challenging. The school is proud of the fact that there is a positive work ethic: learners know what is expected of them to achieve.

The school screens learners for acceptance based on their academic ability and financial need. There are 520 learners in the school. The school provides the learners with a light lunch every day. Every teacher stays one afternoon a week to provide additional help for learners.

[105] Groups of teachers of the same subject set up by the Independent Examinations Board to assist schools to meet curriculum demands.
[106] This school also questions its ranking in this quintile considering all its learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
[107] A school that is permitted to select learners, from poor backgrounds, based on their ability/potential in a particular focus area.

WitsED

The principal experiences the parents as supportive of the school but many lack parenting skills. At a recent staff *bosberaad* parent education was identified as a need. The first parent workshops in very basic life skills have been well-received. The SGB meets once a term but the principal keeps their role to a minimum. The university provides professional skills to help with managing the school, for example, financial management. The school fees are only R1 400,00 per annum. These are supplemented with trust fund income and additional sponsorships. The SGB supplements the GDE staff of 15 teachers with an additional five teachers and two additional support staff members.

The principal believes teachers experience the teaching context as generally positive but their learners' diverse backgrounds is the major contextual factor affecting them. The school has a relatively small number of learners who are not committed to their work. Discipline is not a problem. All the teachers are graduates with approximately 30% having further degrees. The principal reports that the teachers are relatively comfortable about the NCS and regularly attend workshops presented by the university. The teaching staff has remained stable over many years but according to the principal, in recent times, some of the "good ones" have been resigning to go to independent schools. Staff relationships are very good but morale is affected when teachers leave. The complaints from teachers that the principal hears most often include: too much paperwork, having to attend compulsory GDE training workshops "for the sake of it" which are badly presented by people not qualified to do the job. The principal believes teachers have what they need but they would like a better staffroom.

The final school, Deep Valley (school 5) is located to the far north of Randburg in an informal settlement. It was started in 2001 in a few containers and has expanded to a combined school[108] of 1400 learners accommodated in modified containers and temporary classrooms. There are no permanent classrooms. Sponsors built a very large hall, developed a sports field and computer centre which they also maintain. The school has extremely limited resources and is a "no-fee", quintile 1, school. The school is proud of what it does for learners in and outside the classroom. It is regarded as a safe-haven for learners. The deputy principal believes the teachers "go the extra mile" and are professional. The community values what the school does and there is considerable pressure from parents to admit their children.

Learners come from the surrounding settlement. There are 600 in the secondary section. They are generally poor so the school obtains sponsorship of food and clothing for them. Every child is fed once a day. Food parcels are also sent home. The school finds bursaries for high

[108] Primary and secondary school phases are in one school.

WISERD

achieving learners to study further and also for their accommodation. Extra lessons are given for learners generally and the school day for grade 12s is from 07:00 to 16:00. There are also classes in the holidays for them. In 2006 the school achieved a 95% pass rate and approximately 35% university endorsement. The negative socio-economic factors impact on learners: some learners do not have parents, the environment is not conducive to learning, learners arrive late, and the pregnancy rate is high.

The socio-economic circumstances of parents are very bad. Support for the school is generally poor with many parents being illiterate. Not all parents come to collect the reports on a Saturday once a term. The SGB, comprising relatively more educated parents, is committed and involved in motivating the senior learners. In the opinion of the deputy principal, the teachers and the RCL members of the SGB do most of the work.

The deputy principal believes teachers experience the school as a difficult place to teach at. She states that the major factors hindering their performance and the learners' achievement are: poor facilities, lack of laboratories and other equipment, the photocopier does not always work, learners' home circumstances and the impact of the environment on learners, and learner pregnancies. On the day of my visit the power supply was intermittent, a normal occurrence for the school. The staff is very diverse. Some are fully qualified, some are upgrading their qualifications, and some are domestic workers who are willing to learn. Teachers attend workshops frequently and report back to colleagues. The secondary school has mostly qualified teachers.

The information supplied by the principals and deputies about their schools suggests that the schools are different from each other because of their location and individual histories. The impact of the apartheid education policy is evident and the South African social problems are also represented in the schools. I believe the sample covers a wide range of the types of schools in South Africa. However, what is similar about each school is it is performing and delivering quality education in spite of its legacy.

3.2.2.2 Individual teachers' sample

Although the five teachers whom I interviewed individually have different personal backgrounds they are alike in many respects: they are passionate about their subjects and the pleasure they experience when their interactions with learners result in real learning; they care for the learners in a broad sense and believe they are making a difference in the lives of young people and for the future good of South Africa. These attributes and beliefs are described

WiSER

further in chapters 4, 5 and 6. The table below summarises the biographical details of the five teachers I interviewed individually.

Table 5 – Summary of individual teacher participants

Teacher's name, school, and date of interview	Gender	Age (approx.)	Race	Teaching Subjects, qualifications and experience	General additional information
Loren Blue Lake School (1) 13/08/2007	Female	Late thirties	White	Subject Head for History and Social Sciences with a BA Honours degree in History and fifteen years' experience.	Loren presents workshops for teachers on topics in the History curriculum, including creative ways to teach (and assess) them. She is a District Cluster Leader for Grade 12.
Celia Country College (2) 15/08/2007	Female	Late thirties	White	Head of Department for Life Orientation which Celia has taught for about six years, prior to that she taught English for five years. Her formal qualification is a BA (Ed) in English and History and a School Management Diploma. She has attended GET and FET level workshops provided by the GDE in Life Orientation and courses offered by other providers.	Celia is a District Cluster Leader who helps her colleagues in practical organisational ways as well as with curriculum content.
Murphy Tower Hill School (3) 17/08/2007	Male	Early thirties	African	Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy teacher; Murphy has recently obtained a BEd in Mathematics Education (focusing particularly on the new curriculum subject of Mathematical Literacy). He found this course enormously beneficial. He has about eight years' experience in Mathematics teaching. He attends user groups and conferences to extend his knowledge and obtain ideas for teaching more creatively.	Murphy would like to share what he learnt in his studies but has not had many opportunities to do so. He regards mentoring other Mathematics/ Mathematical Literacy teachers at his school as very important.
Denny Red River School (4) 12/09/2007	Female	Late fifties	White	Head of Department for English Home Language; Denny has a BA degree with a major in English, a MEd and thirty-three years' experience. To develop herself further she attends workshops that she believes are likely to be worthwhile.	Denny is a District Cluster Leader for Grade 12.
Albert Deep Valley School (5) 17/09/2007	Male	Early thirties	African	Subject Head for IsiZulu Home Language; Albert has a BA degree which he upgraded from his original three year teaching qualification.	Albert teaches IsiZulu but feels isolated. There are limited opportunities to extend his knowledge but he does try to find them.

3.2.2.3 Focus group teachers' sample

The information about the teachers in the focus groups is summarised in Table 6 below.

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Table 6 – Summary of focus group participants

Focus group number, school, and date of interview	Number of participants	Gender	Age (approx.)	Race	Teaching Subjects
1 (Blue Lake School) 08/08/2007	9	2 male, 7 female	50, 38 27, 30, 33, 35, 36, 45, 51	1 African, 1 coloured, 2 Indian, 5 white	Visual Arts, Afrikaans First Add. Lang., English Home Language (2), Life Sciences and Natural Sciences (2), Accounting, Physical Sciences and Natural Sciences, Consumer Studies
2 (Country College) 15/08/2007	5	1 male, 4 female	35 35, 40, 53, 60	5 white	Physical Sciences, Tourism, Afrikaans First Add. Lang., Business Economics, Visual Arts
3 (Tower Hill School) 22/08/2007	5	3 male, 2 female	34, 38, 40 32, 40	5 African	Mathematics and Physical Sciences, Accounting and Business Studies, Technology and Arts and Culture, Business Studies and Consumer Studies, History and Social Sciences
4 (Red River School) 06/09/2007	5	1 male, 4 female	33 35, 40, 45, 50	1 coloured, 4 white	Life Orientation, Economics, Accounting, EMS, English Home Language
5 (Deep Valley School) 17/09/2007	3	1 male, 2 female	38, 40, 45	3 African	Social Sciences and Geography, Business Studies, Computer Applications Technology

3.3 OPERATIONALISING THE VARIABLES

3.3.1 Accessing the data sources

I required permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to conduct the research at the identified public schools. The letter of motivation included the rationale for the study and the benefits that could accrue to the GDE as a result of the study. The GDE gave permission provided that the research was not conducted in the fourth term of the school year (see Appendix 1A).

Once I had permission from the GDE I provided each District Director, Principal and SGB with a similar letter of motivation requesting their consent and co-operation (see Appendix 1B). I attached a copy of the letter of permission from the GDE to assure them that the study was legitimate and that the GDE would have no objection to the research being conducted at the schools. Finally, once the schools had identified the teachers they too were provided with the rationale for the study and explanation of how teachers could benefit from it (see Appendix 1C and 1D). In all the letters I emphasised that care would be taken to ensure confidentiality and that ethical considerations would be observed.

WiSER

3.3.2 Questionnaires

I used two questionnaires: the principals'/deputy principals' school background questionnaire and a self-administered questionnaire for all the teacher participants (see Appendix 2A and Appendix 2B). The principles of constructing questionnaires and their advantages and disadvantages are applicable to both questionnaires. Questionnaires depend on asking the right questions in the correct way to obtain quality data. Questions must be specific, easily understood (concepts/terms must be known to the respondents) and focus on one idea at a time; they must not be leading questions; the format of the questionnaire and the sequence of questions should help the participants' thinking about the issues; they should be piloted to see whether they meet the objective and are understood in the same way by participants. The questionnaires include closed-ended questions to obtain background information about the schools, biographical information about the participants in the study, and an understanding of teachers' knowledge of the technical aspects of assessment. However, the questions that explore teachers' personal beliefs and practices and their education philosophy are open-ended. The advantages of the questionnaire are: it is cheap and relatively quick to administer; answers are recoded and can be reviewed easily at a later stage; it standardises what is explored and therefore makes description and comparison simpler. The disadvantages are: it is easy to omit essential questions and thus miss important data; analysis of the data is time-consuming.

1. Principal/deputy principal school background questionnaire

I administered this questionnaire (see Appendix 2A) orally to the principals of three schools (Schools 2, 3 and 4) and the deputy principals of two schools (1 and 5). The purpose was to obtain data about the school background to understand the contextual factors in which the teachers work. The data sought was mostly of a factual nature, for example: the location and history of the school, its size, learner and staff numbers, its academic achievements and what the school prides itself on, the qualifications of the teachers and the extent of professional development and collegiality in the school, the extent of parental involvement, resources available for teachers, measures the school has in place to assist learners, what the principal believes hinders learners' progress, and aspects that teachers complain about. The participants responded orally and I captured this as the respondent was speaking. I did this before I interviewed the teachers at that school. I understand that these responses are the subjective interpretation of the individual participants.

I administered this questionnaire myself and respondents' answers were given orally and recorded by me. Some of the disadvantages of self-administered questionnaires can therefore

WiSER

be avoided. Follow-up questions can be used to obtain a clear and full understanding of the response. The return rate is excellent because the respondent is questioned individually and recorded on the spot. The disadvantage is that the recorder must listen exceptionally well to capture the nuances of the responses and be sure not to inject bias in the way answers are recorded. This type of questionnaire is better suited to obtaining factual detail rather than more sensitive data. It is not appropriate for an in-depth understanding of an issue.

2. Individual and focus group teachers' questionnaire

The teachers completed a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix 2B) which explored their personal background, beliefs about education and their experiences related to assessment policy and associated practices. It asked for written responses, including one requiring them to describe themselves in terms of a metaphor.[109] This was done at the end of the individual interview/focus group interview and teachers had a week or more to complete it.

The instructions were given orally and the questions viewed by the participants in the presence of the researcher. This was done to avoid the disadvantages of a self-administered questionnaire. I tried to ensure that the respondents understood the meaning of the concepts and terms used, except when the objective of the question was to discover what the respondents knew or did not know about the topic. I used the self-administered questionnaire to find out the respondents' personal history and beliefs about education and their knowledge and attitude to assessment and its associated practices because I believe it was the most appropriate way of obtaining detailed and honest information. This topic would have been tedious in a group interview and participants might not have been willing to speak honestly in a group situation or face-to-face in an individual interview. The disadvantages were that I could not (easily) probe the respondents for more detail and the return rate (twenty-one teachers out of thirty-two completed the written questionnaire) meant that not all participants contributed to my understanding of the phenomenon that I was exploring in the questionnaire.

3.3.3 Interviews[110]

Janesick (1998) in "*Stretching" Exercises for Qualitative Researchers* provides very helpful guidelines and warnings about pitfalls which I studied in order to conduct effective interviews.

[109] Sometimes people say things in metaphors that speak more honestly about their feelings or experiences because they do not consciously realise what the metaphors are implying and so they do not self-censor. Sometimes it is the only way they can explain a complex idea or experience because it may be more concrete. "... the essence of a metaphor is experiencing one thing in terms of another ... through comparison ... or analogy" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 926, 927).

[110] "Qualitative interviewing design is flexible, iterative, and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone. … questioning is redesigned throughout the project." (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 46, 47).

WitsETD

The checklist covering details, such as: giving advance notice, how the questions should be approached, logistics, moderator skills and what to do after the session, was particularly helpful (pp. 38, 39). In order to facilitate the transcription and analysis of the data collected in the individual and focus group interviews I used a voice recorder to record the discussions. Participants gave consent for this to happen.

1. Individual teachers' qualitative interviews

I conducted qualitative interviews using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 2C) with five individual teachers, one from each of the identified schools. I conducted them at the school, after school hours in classrooms or offices, during August and September 2007. The teachers chose the place and time and they appeared to be quite at ease in the environment. Once the teachers had established that I was not an education department official and that they were invited to express honest opinions they relaxed and spoke freely. The interviews took the form of a conversation where I asked questions that were familiar to me but I tried not to appear as if I was proceeding down a tightly structured list of prepared questions. The main topics included: personal beliefs/education philosophy, understanding of the concepts of "professionalism" and "quality education", curriculum policy and practices, external accountability systems/measures/policies, professional development practices and relationships with colleagues, perceptions of workload, personal classroom practices, school resources/ practices/factors (as they affect the teachers). All interviewees were provided with the questions. I tried to let the interviewees do nearly all of the talking while I listened carefully, interpreting the meaning of the response and its significance for the research and then either asking other questions to take the matter further or judging that the response was complete and directing the interviewee to a new aspect (Babbie, 2005: 314). I tried to observe Steinar Kvale's (1996: 88) seven stages[111] of the interviewing process as summarised by Babbie (2005: 316). I recorded the interviews with the participants' knowledge and permission. An expert third party transcribed them and I checked the transcription. I observed all ethical considerations in this process.

The advantages of this type of interview are: the pitfalls of self-administered questionnaires, such as the use of ambiguous and vague terms, double-barrelled questions, asking questions outside the knowledge scope of the participant, can be avoided; the face-to-face interaction with

[111] Thematising: clarifying the purpose of the interviews; Designing: laying out the process through which you'll accomplish your purpose, including a consideration of the ethical dimension; Interviewing: doing the actual interviews; Transcribing: creating a written text of the interviews; Analysing: determining the meaning of gathered materials in relation to the purpose of the study; Verifying: checking the reliability and validity of the materials; Reporting: telling others what you have learned (Steinar Kvale,1996: 88, summarised by Babbie, 2005: 316).

WisETD

respondents enables any serious misunderstandings to be cleared immediately; the voice record captures completely and accurately the detail of the respondents' responses and nuances of expression; it contributes to easier description and analysis of the data and provides evidence which can be quoted. The disadvantages are: the researcher-interviewer can impose his/her presence or agenda and exert undue influence on the participants; the interviewer requires skill to prevent the respondent digressing significantly from the questions and to curtail responses that are irrelevant or unnecessarily lengthy and to direct follow-up questions to make sense of responses that may be confused; transcription of interviews is time-consuming and requires careful checking. To limit disadvantages of this method I tried to ensure that the interview schedule was not too long, that questions were posed in an order that would advance the collection of data in the most efficacious manner, that sensitive questions were broached in a careful manner at the most opportune time in the interview, that the language I used was well understood by participants, and that I did not ask leading questions that influenced the participants to give a particular response.

2. Focus groups

I conducted five focus groups, one at each school. The largest group had eight participants and the smallest three.[112] I conducted these interviews at the school, after school hours in classrooms or offices, during August and September 2007. As for the individual teachers' interviews the participants chose place and time and they appeared to be quite at ease in the environment. I hoped this would enable me to derive maximum benefit from the interaction (Babbie, 2005: 316). Although I gave a brief introduction about myself and I had given them a letter about my study, the teachers in the focus groups asked me questions to establish that I was not an education department official. When they realised that I was inviting them to express honest opinions they relaxed and spoke freely. They asked questions about my school and from time to time in some of the interviews they wanted to know how their experience compared with mine or made remarks such as "I don't suppose you have that in your school" (FG2/15/08/07) – referring to a discipline issue. I tried to limit my responses in order to ensure the voice of the focus group teachers emerged and was not influenced by me. I used the same semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 2C) that I used for the individual teacher interviews to guide the discussion. The focus group interviews lasted between just over one hour to an hour and three-quarters. Participants contributed eagerly and in some cases

[112] The principal or SMT identified some of the participants but the focus groups comprised volunteers. While I asked the schools for 4-6 participants for the focus groups I was dependent on volunteers and their goodwill. School One had more volunteers and School Five had fewer.

WitsETD

commented on how much they had enjoyed the discussion and that the time had passed very quickly.

This method of data collection has advantages: it is flexible; it delivers speedy results; is not costly to do; and group dynamics often result in new ideas emerging that would not necessarily have done so in an individual interview. However, there are some negative factors associated with this method (Stycos, 1981; Cohen *et al*., 2000; Wooten & Reid II, 2000): the researcher has to be skilled in handling the discussion which is more difficult to control than individual interviews; care must be taken to prevent domination by individuals and groupthink; the researcher must avoid over-directing the discussion or imposing his/her own viewpoints; and the data is difficult to process and analyse. Aware of these advantages and disadvantages, I tried to maximise the opportunities that this method provides and to avoid doing things which could prevent rich and reliable data emerging from the discussions.

3.3.4 Visual response to a prompt statement

The final "instrument" used was a prompt statement that asked teachers to draw how they see themselves. By way of conclusion and summary of their beliefs, experiences and context, I asked the individual teachers and the focus group teachers to provide a visual response to the request: "Think about yourself as a teacher. Now please, if you don't mind too much, *draw* how you see yourself ...". This prompt statement on an otherwise blank page was included with the questionnaire. I chose this method of data collection because I have from time to time asked teachers at my school to draw in response to a question or statement. Their drawings have always been very rich in meaningful and valid data. Similar to factors operating in a metaphor, the drawings appear to release teachers to express freely and honestly what they may not have articulated in words in the interviews or written responses.

The advantage of this instrument is that the respondents are free to interpret the statement as they understand it and as they saw themselves. This is also a disadvantage as the lack of standardisation means it is then difficult to collate and analyse the data captured in the variety of responses. As it was a self-administered task the return rate of 75% (twenty-four out of thirty-two teachers drew a picture) was lower than for researcher-administered instruments.

WisETD

3.3.5 Data management, reliability and validity

I kept brief "soft" field notes[113] throughout the data collection stage of the study. The completed school background questionnaires, completed written questionnaires, and teachers' drawings have been kept. An expert at transcription transcribed (and I checked) the interviews and the focus group interviews from the voice recorder to provide primary textual data. This was done as soon after the interviews as possible to prevent loss of data. I used the electronic text version of the transcription for coding. The original voice records as well as the transcriptions have been kept.

In this section I discuss briefly the strengths, weaknesses and main sources of error of the research methodology outlined above. Qualitative field research has both strengths and weaknesses (Babbie, 2005: 320, 321; Mouton, 2001: 150). Its strengths are that it enables in-depth insights because subtle nuances can be captured. The researcher can establish good rapport with the subject and this usually ensures optimum data collection. It is easy to engage in field research relatively spontaneously as an opportunity is seen. It is flexible and can be modified at any stage. It is generally not costly to undertake unless specialised equipment or large numbers of research assistants are employed. Its weaknesses are that it does not easily lead to generalisability of results, the measurement instruments are not standardised and analysis of the data can be extremely time-consuming.

The validity and reliability of the research data, and the quality of data measurement, are fundamental to the worth of the entire research process. Validity is concerned with what the measurement (instruments) actually measured. Did they measure what was supposed to be measured? Reliability relates to the dependability of the data. Would the same measurement (instrument) obtain the same result each time it were used (Babbie, 2005: 321)? With respect to validity Mouton (2001: 150) considers this type of qualitative research to have "high construct validity" as the data obtained is not superficial as can occur with surveys and some other measurements. Concepts can really be understood in depth and illustrations given to enrich the data. There is a potential problem, however, relating to reliability because of the potential for the bias of the researcher to affect the data. This deficiency can be mitigated if the researcher is aware of the impact of self and deliberately adopts an objective scientific stance as far as this is humanly possible. The small sample that is measured also affects the reliability of the data. It is valid for what was measured but if a different sample were measured using the same

[113] Henning (2004: 87) calls the field notes "hard" notes and the annotations which record the researcher's experience in the field "soft" notes.

WitsETD

measurement the same results might not be found. Because I have used different data sources and different methods (triangulation) the interpretation of the data can be more reliable.

Errors can be made at each stage of the research process; some have been referred to in chapter 3.3, p. 86 above. The researcher must be cognisant at all times of the potential for error and must reflect at each stage of the process on whether there could be any threats to the validity or reliability of the data and make any necessary adjustments or caution him or herself against the known pitfalls and common causes of error. Bias and sloppiness/inaccuracy are potentially threats at all stages. However, there are sources of error at the data analysis stage of which one must be particularly careful, namely, drawing inferences from data that are not supported by the data and selective interpretation of the data (as a result of bias in favour of a pet theory, for instance) (Mouton 2001: 110). Allowing error to creep in at this most significant stage nullifies the strategy which has been applied consistently through all the preceding stages of the research to obtain reliable and valid data.

Overall qualitative field research is a valuable research methodology and well suited to the nature of my study provided the researcher is constantly mindful of pitfalls and the potential for error and is vigilant to avoid them.

Mindful of Kvale's (2002) "scientific holy trinity" of "reliability[114], validity[115] and generalisation[116]" (p. 300, in Henning, 2004: 146), I used the following strategies to ensure reliability and validity issues of the data collection:

- piloting the instruments on two volunteer teachers;
- making minor adjustments to the instruments to improve clarity in the question and provide for a logical flow of ideas, before I applied them to the case study participants (Mouton, 2001);
- triangulation using different kinds of data sources, using different methods in order to give "different views or vantage points from which to understand a category" of data (my main strategy) (Flick, 2002: 37, 38);

[114] "The quality of measurement that suggests the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations ... not to be confused with *validity*" (Babbie, 2005: 489).
[115] A term describing a measure that accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure. ... Though the ultimate validity of the measure can never be proven, we may agree to its relative validity on the basis of *face validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity, content validity, internal validation*, and *external validation*" (*ibid*: 490).
[116] As understood generally – the extent to which a phenomenon identified in one situation is relevant more broadly in other situations.

WisETD

- being aware at every step of my own biases which prompted me to do the research, I checked my interpretations with respondents[117];
- checking correspondence of research data with literature data;
- checking for validity at each step of the research process (e.g. the validity of the sample for the research design, using valid instruments, transcribing the interviews in a valid manner, etc).

The small size of the case study limits generalisation but by taking the sample of teachers from a diverse range of schools within the identified classification of "achieving schools" it helps to test the generalisability of the data and findings. The nature of this type of qualitative study does make it difficult to achieve both reliability and validity at the same time as ensuring rich data from methods of data collection, such as semi-structured interviews and drawings that are less precise because the issues that are responded to are nuanced and variable in each interview or focus group. Babbie & Mouton (2001) acknowledge this tension between the criteria for reliability and validity and that a "trade-off" is generally necessary (p. 124).

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To complete the research process and attain the research purpose I analysed and interpreted the data collected by means of the fieldwork. Mouton (2001: 108, 109) defines briefly the terms: analysis and synthesis. Analysis involves "breaking up" the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. The aim of the analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data by looking at the relationships between concepts for patterns or trends or themes in the data (Mouton, 2001: 108). Interpretation involves the synthesis of the data into larger coherent wholes by interpreting (and explaining) the data and formulating hypotheses or theories that account for the patterns and trends in the data. Interpretation means relating these results and findings into existing theoretical frameworks or models, and showing whether they are supported or falsified by the new interpretation (Mouton, 2001: 109).

I analysed the data I collected using grounded theory analysis. Henning (2004: 114) describes it as a "tool for constructing substantive theories". This approach of analysis enables the researcher to follow a set of inductive steps that turn "concrete realities" to "conceptual understandings of them" (Charmaz, 2002: 675, in Henning, 2004: 115). It begins "with observations rather than hypotheses and seeks to discover patterns and discover theories from

[117] However, I recognise the truth of Borland (1991) who said "When we do interpretations, we bring our own knowledge, experience and concerns to our material, and the result, we hope, is a richer, more textured understanding of its meaning" (p. 73, in McCotter, 2001: 11).

WitsETD

the ground up with no preconceptions" (Babbie, 2005: 389). I used the data to explore, describe and explain various aspects of the lived experiences of the teachers who form the focus of this study. I analysed the data using qualitative data analysing techniques and the grounded theory approach which involved the following steps:

- "Open coding" which is the initial classification and labelling of concepts. Babbie (2005) states that the codes are "suggested by the researchers' examination and questioning of the data" (p. 395). Henning refers to the naming and categorising the phenomenon through close examination of the data as coding. This entails: "Data are broken down into discrete parts, which are compared and questioned with 'what, where who, when and how'. In other words, open coding fractures data into concepts and categories. Then the data are compared and similar incidents are grouped together and given the same conceptual label. The process of grouping concepts at a higher, more abstract, level is termed categorising" (Henning, 2004: 131).

- "Concept mapping" which is the "graphical display of concepts and their interrelations, useful in the formulation of theory" (Babbie, 2005: 399). From the concept maps (I call them mind maps - see an example in Appendix 3A) I was able to interpret the data and synthesise it in the form of a description, or theme, for example, "Teacher professionalism under attack".

The analysis of the data began in an informal way during the collection process. I made notes on the interviews and focus groups as I went along. The notes covered observations of the context, the manner in which the interviews/focus groups were set up and where they were done. I observed the teachers in an informal way as they arrived for the interviews, their introductory remarks and the perception I had of their willingness to participate in the process. In other words, I noted a very superficial picture of their frame of mind and preparedness for the interview/focus group. For example, I perceived a sense of exhaustion when the participants spoke about the continuous demands placed upon them and pressure of deadlines. Their body language indicated this when they slumped down in their chairs and sighed frequently when voicing their frustrations. Participation in the interview/focus group seemed to be an additional burden. Two or three teachers had to be reminded to come to the venue or were fetched by another participant and when they arrived they were carrying work in their arms. However, this was combined with a desire or willingness to participate in the hope that something helpful might eventually come from it. They did view it as an opportunity to influence and exercise personal agency. The weariness and "battle fatigue" were more

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prevalent in the schools where the interviews took place in the last few weeks of term three[118]. As the interviews/focus groups proceeded I made mental and written notes of the issues participants pursued regularly with heightened emotion and particular conviction. These areas included: a sense of administrative demands/overload – hands thrown in the air, papers and files waved about; frustration at the inability to get answers or essential support from "the department"[119] – the telling of anecdotes that illustrated their points and some emotive name-calling; and expressions of conflict when it came to choices regarding whether to comply with GDE demands or exercise their professional judgment and autonomy and do what they felt was better for their learners. I observed the participants' reactions at the end of the interviews and without exception teachers expressed verbally or demonstrated in terms of their body language the fact that they were happy to be given the opportunity to talk with the interviewer, a fellow teacher and colleagues, for example: a member of a focus group said with disappointment and accompanying release of shoulders because he had enjoyed speaking about the things troubling him about his work: "Was it one hour? We can't usually say these things" (Murphy, Tower Hill,17/08/07). Another teacher expressed similar relief: "I've quite enjoyed that" because she felt someone was listening to her feelings and opinions: "At least someone is listening" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). There was a clear sense of release. These experiences influenced my thinking as I collected subsequent data and later on when I started coding the data. Combined with the principals' descriptions of their school contexts (see chapter 3.2.2.1, p. 78) these observations help to create "'thick' (or information rich) description" data, (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 15, in Henning, 2004: 128).

The three formal stages of the data analysis are summarised in Figure 1 overleaf.

Stage one of the formal analysis began with my reading all the transcribed interviews as well as the notes referred to above and making a mind map of the ideas that were expressed in each interview, ten in all. I grouped similar ideas and expressions whether verbal or non-verbal on the mind map. In brief the mind map included teachers' beliefs about: good or quality teachers and teaching; teacher professionalism (including the notions of autonomy and compliance), attitude towards policies such as the (R)NCS, NPRR (often called the assessment protocol), IQMS and WSE; factors in their school that affect their teachers, such as: the learners' attitudes, parent support, collegial interaction, workload, etc. This process was to some extent made easier because I selected the themes in conjunction with the major groupings of questions I used in the semi-structured interview schedule and the written questionnaire.

[118] Red River High School and Deep Valley High School.
[119] The GDE.

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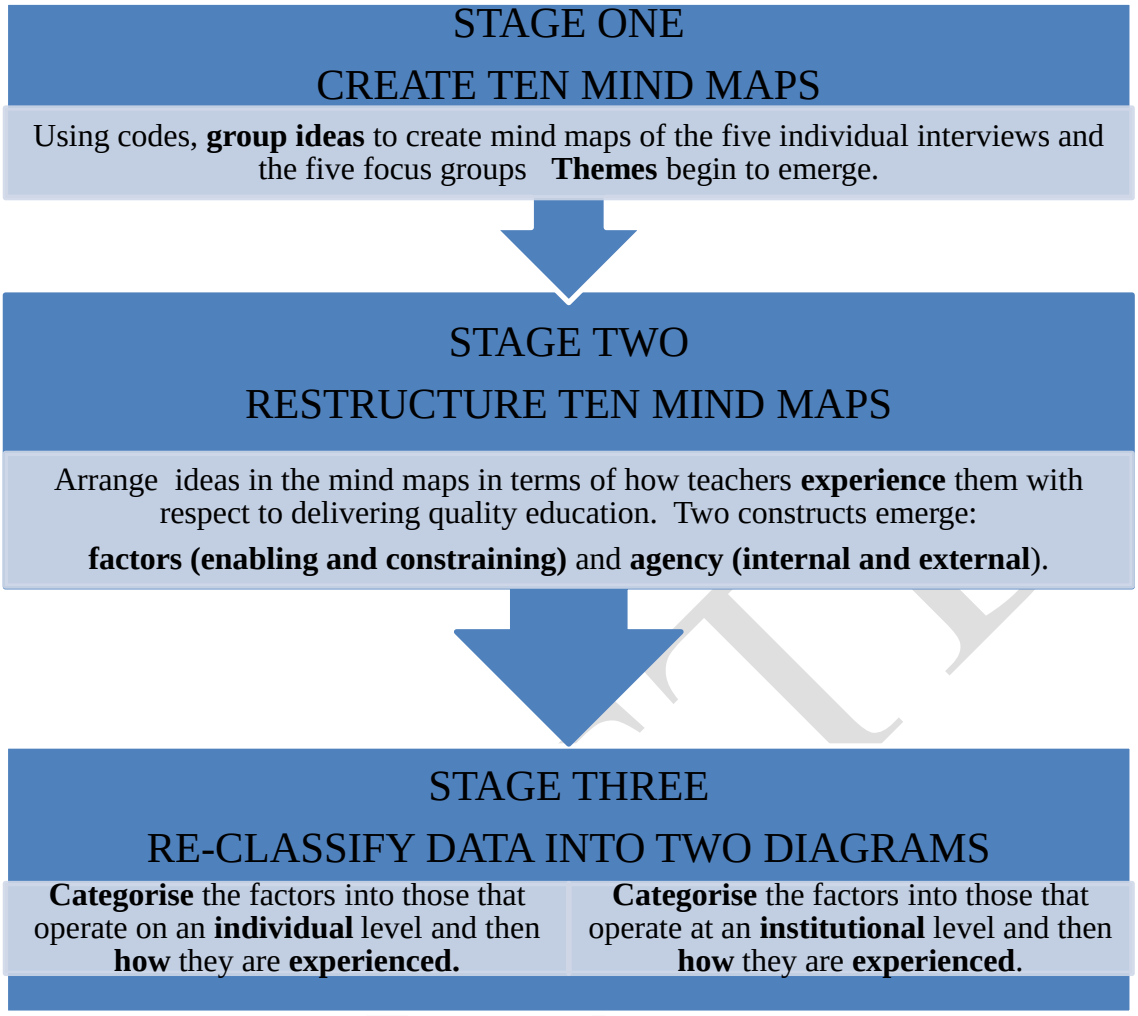
Figure 1 - Formal stages of data analysis



I compared the ten mind maps looking particularly for the repetitions and concordance of the themes themselves and the content of the themes between the individual teachers and the focus groups. I then looked for outlier ideas mentioned by only one individual teacher or only by one or some of the focus groups. At this point I also re-read the responses to the school background questionnaire on the context of the schools to ascertain whether the variance in the content of the themes was in some way attributable to the particular school's context. Participants inserted information that was meaningful to them even if it did not strictly answer the question asked. I had to take care to capture these points because they often were powerful statements about another issue affecting their work.

Stage two involved a second restructured map for each individual interview and each focus group. However, this time I divided the themes into how the teachers experienced them. Because the central question that this study explores is why teachers believe their professionalism is under attack, what they believe can improve the quality of learning outcomes in their schools, and what model of teacher regulation seems to emerge from their

accounts, I took each idea raised by the individual teacher or focus group and I broke down these ideas into two broad categories: firstly what teachers believed and experienced as meaningful or enabling them to deliver quality education and secondly what they believed and experienced as meaningless or constraining their ability to do so. I then further broke down these categories into two sub-categories based on the source of the enabling or constraining factor: whether the source was within the individual teacher, internal factors, or did it stem from within the institution, external factors.

Two organising categories for the data began to develop. According to Henning (2004) "categorising" is grouping concepts at a higher or abstract level (p. 131). For the purposes of working with the data I called them: "Factors which operate on an individual level" and "Factors which operate at an institutional level". They represent areas where the teacher can exercise individual agency (actions from within) and where the teacher is externally driven (actions in response, reactions), respectively. In the former the teacher takes control and exercises personal responsibility for decisions and actions; in the latter he or she does not take full responsibility and attributes the other with agency for his or her decisions and actions. This mapping process foregrounded two constructs: factors and agency.

In the third stage I re-classified the data. I drew two large diagrams, one for the "Factors which operate on an individual (internal) level" and another for "Factors which operate at an institutional (external) level". I classified the ideas from the original mind maps of the individual teachers' interviews and the focus groups and assigned them to these composite diagrams according to whether the source was an individual or institutional factor. The sixty-four codes in this analysis are words used in their common, everyday sense, for example, "school structures and practices", "parents" and "physical resources", as well as those that are terms very specifically explored in terms of the research question, for example, "professionalism", "accountability", professional judgment" and "quality education". Glaser and Strauss (1967: 101) state that codes could be suggested by prior theory. I found this to be very true and useful. By means of an inductive process I gradually built up a picture grouping the factors in themes and then sub-dividing them into more detailed units, sub-themes and, in some instances, sub-sub-themes. In this stage I included factors from the teachers' drawings that could be assigned to the appropriate category, theme and sub-theme. Within each theme and sub-theme the factors were listed on the left, and written in blue, if teachers experienced them as constraining and on the right, in red, if teachers experienced them as enabling. For example, a factor such as "mentoring and induction" was placed on the "institutional level" diagram, in the sub-theme "Aimed at support" of the theme "School structure and practices"

WisETD

and because it is experienced as enabling it was written in red (see an example of these diagrams in Appendix 3B).

The diagrams provided a global picture of the ideas emerging from the data. The process used thus far is a blend of what Flick (1998) and Henning (2004) view as "global analysis". For Flick the aim of "global analysis" is "to obtain an overview of the thematic range of the text" (1998: 196, in Henning, 2004: 109). Henning sees it differently: "main themes are identified because of an holistic reading and accompanying notes, not just preparation for coding" the very structure of the data is seen as the organising logic – therefore the main themes are searched for by intensive reading (studying) of the text – making notes and drawing concept maps (or mind maps) in the process, but not disassembling or chunking into segments. It is a process of tracing the thinking patterns of interviewees" (Henning, 2004: 109).

I identified the following categories, themes and sub-themes (given in brackets):

Category 1: "Factors which operate on an individual (internal) level"

Themes:

- "Personal professional identity (beliefs, purpose, identity)",
- "Professionalism and quality teacher",
- "Concept of a profession - the teacher as a professional (managing the accountability/autonomy tension)",
- "Promotion of the profession",
- "Morale",
- "Opportunity to influence policy",
- "Context" (colleagues, parents, learners),
- "Managing workload (do it, don't do it)",
- "Policy (teaching roles and expectations", qualifications/preparation, seven roles of an educator, additional roles)".

Category 2: The "Factors which operate at an institutional (external) level"

Themes:

- "Policy as represented by the NDE (accountability – IQMS, WSE, National Protocol on Recording and Reporting Assessment – assessment, recording and reporting, National Curriculum Statement – principles/methodology, content, National Teaching

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Awards)", "Education Department as represented by the GDE (accountability measures, interpretation of policy, district officials)",

- "Community",
- "School (parents, learners, teacher colleagues)",
- "School structures and practices (aimed at accountability, aimed at support, extra-curricular programme)",
- "Context – educational, social, political, economic legacy (physical resources, educational differences).

The purpose of this study is to understand three issues: why teachers believe their professionalism is under attack, what they believe can improve the quality of learning outcomes in their schools and what model of teacher regulation seems to emerge from their accounts. It is therefore necessary to identify the impact of the factors identified from the data. I selected the categories of constraining and enabling to represent the teachers' experience of the factors.

The writing process was actually part of the thinking and interpreting stage, "writing is thinking in print" (Booth, 1995). For example, during the second mind-mapping stage "teacher preparation" was identified as a sub-theme under the heading "policy" because the requirements for becoming a teacher are determined in policy and therefore it is an institutional level factor. However, in the writing stage it became clearer that it did not belong there if I was striving to attain coherence. Even though the policy determines teacher preparation this is an area where the teacher still has control. This debate concerned the "source" of the factor. The teacher can, to a large extent, control his or her preparation for teaching. It is ultimately within the individual's domain. However, it also shows ambivalence because some aspects of teacher preparation, for example, compulsory workshops, are externally imposed on teachers. The write-up of the analysis did involve a number of drafts as the thinking progressed.

Before I could interpret the data and develop an argument I had to understand the data as coded in the themes concerning "Factors which operate on an individual level" and "Factors which operate at an institutional level" in relation to how teachers experienced them as enabling or constraining their ability to deliver quality education. What became clear to me was that teachers' professional identity was fragile but that there were factors in both the internal and external environment that strengthened it and some that fragmented it. Wondering whether this was as a result of their interpretation of professionalism, especially their conception of professional autonomy, I studied the data to see how they experienced the tension between

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autonomy and externally imposed control. In chapter 1.5, p. 16, I described my research journey that caused me to follow these steps. I describe these findings in chapter 4 under the headings: "The fragile self" and "Professional autonomy – the delicate balance". Having obtained this understanding of what teachers at the individual level do or do not experience as strengthening their professionalism and consequently meaningful, or meaningless, in chapter 5 I describe from the data what at the institutional level do the teachers experience as contributing or not contributing towards the delivery of quality education and the exact impact of these factors on teachers.

In the final stage of interpretation of this research I merged and integrated data from the case studies and data from the literature texts, the empirical and the theoretical, in order to provide evidence for my argument. Gumundsdottir (1996) calls this process of meaning making "transformation". He goes on to describe "interpretation" using the words of Ormiston and Schrift (1990) as "the exchange of one word for another" and in the words of Derrida (1974) "grafting of one text on another" (p. 31). This integration of the final data as evidence in an argument is what Henning (2004) refers to as "re-contextualisation of data" (p. 107-109).

To provide a structure for relating my interpretation and arguments to the research questions I introduce the metaphor[120] of the "nest of systems" (Muller and Roberts, 2000), used in the relevant literature. I present my argument and the interpretation of the data using the three conceptual claims of the study as a framework:

- Teachers thrive on a vibrant professional identity and their conception of quality is mediated by their experiences of professionalism.
- External and internal accountability need to be aligned for quality improvement reforms to succeed and be sustainable.
- Teacher regulation is necessary for quality improvement, but it requires conditions that recognise the value of teacher leadership.

When written-up, these arguments on each theme are the resultant findings of this research study. In chapter 7, the final chapter, I draw conclusions and develop the argument further when I identify the implications and recommendations for further research.

[120] The value of the metaphor is discussed in chapter 3.3.2, footnote 109 (p. 88) above. Denzin & Lincoln, (2000) argue that "Theoretical schemata are always situated in complex, systematic metaphors" and "Metaphors organise social scientific work and affect the interpretations of the 'facts'; indeed, facts are interpretable ('make sense') only in terms of their place within a metaphoric structure" (pp. 927, 928).

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3.5 SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER

The intention of this qualitative study is to explore whether a relevant and reliable accountability system, a framework for developing quality, that supports and strengthens the professional capacity/responsibility (professionalism) of teachers, could be the vehicle for structural and personal change that results in a vast improvement in the delivery of quality education outcomes thereby bringing about this transformation. By means of a case study of five individual teachers and five focus groups from five diverse but "achieving schools" I investigate how teachers experience the current regulatory controls which aim at operationalising quality. I seek to understand three issues: why teachers believe their professionalism is under attack, what they believe can improve the quality of learning outcomes in their schools, and what model of teacher regulation seems to emerge from their accounts. Using data from literature I construct a conceptual framework which becomes the framework for my interpretation and argument.

I use questionnaires, qualitative interviews, focus groups, and visual responses to a prompt statement to gather the data. To analyse the data I use grounded theory analysis. After the coding process and the identification of categories, themes and sub-themes, I describe what I find in the data. In chapter 4 I focus on factors operating at an individual level affecting teachers' ability to deliver quality, in particular what sustains teachers' professional identity and what damages it, including the impact of regulatory controls on teachers, and the need for a balance between autonomy and control. In chapter 5, I describe the factors operating at an institutional level that teachers in "achieving schools" believe are meaningful for quality education delivery and those that are meaningless. In chapter 6, I re-contextualise the data, integrating the research data and literature, to interpret them and construct arguments to answer the research questions and present them in terms of the three claims of the conceptual framework.

In chapter 7, I draw conclusions highlighting implications of the findings and make some recommendations which in some cases are generalisable for all teachers while others may be more relevant to teachers in "achieving schools" and those schools relatively close to this level of achievement.

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CHAPTER 4 DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

4.1 THE FRAGILE SELF

4.1.1 Fragmented identity

The teachers' identities are framed by their beliefs and experiences. The daily work of teachers exposes them to so many different experiences which impact on the image they have of themselves (see, for example, Drawing 2 - "The entertainer", Drawing 3 - "Superwoman" and Drawing 4 - "The octopus", below). Some experiences build them up and some break them down. What they believe about teaching and teacher quality is confirmed or refuted by their experiences, contributing either to the restoration of damaged identity or the destruction of it. On one day within a very short time period a teacher may face a range of experiences. The identity may be built up or shattered. It is not secure, stable and certain.

Teachers' professional identity is intimately bound up not only with their experiences but also with what they believe the work of teachers should be and its social value or with what they believe are the essential characteristics and qualities of a professional teacher. When their actual experiences conflict with these beliefs, their identity feels fragmented. In the analysis that follows I shall explore what the teachers regard as pre-conditions for the profession, what they believe the work of teachers should be, compared with what it actually is, and what they consider the essential characteristics of professional teacher identity are.

In the opinion of these teachers, there are at least three essential pre-conditions for being a (professional) teacher: firstly, a love for the learners and secondly, passion for their work and commitment to serve without the expectation of large rewards. One teacher recommends the teaching profession only to people who understand this: "If it really is their passion and they love children and they know they won't become rich, yes!" (FG2/15/08/07). Thirdly, a professional identity implies that the teacher has the required knowledge of the profession. He or she is well-qualified in an area of specialisation:

> Well you don't want to sound like a classist snob [laughs] but the way that I explain to the kids when I do career counselling [that there] is a general degree and then you get a professional degree; the difference is you have specialised. So I suppose the idea is, one would say, a professional has specialised in a certain field. (Celia, Country College/15/08/07)

> To be a professional you'd have to be well-prepared and you'd have to be well-informed. You can't really be professional if you don't know your subject. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

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The teachers report that no particular training was given to develop their understanding of professional identity. The identity formed 'subconsciously'. In the experience of one teacher, role models did have a significant influence: firstly in the decision to become a teacher, secondly, the choice of subject specialisation, and thirdly, and most importantly, influencing the professional conduct of the teacher. The absence of worthy role models could prevent the formation of what this teacher considers a correct professional identity:

> No, I think it just came. I don't think anybody taught me. Well I became a teacher because of a role model, and especially an English teacher because of a role model. But I don't think role models … you know what, subliminally they must have had an influence on me. Maybe that's why we have such a problem with some of our teaching students. Because they've been to schools where they actually haven't seen how a teacher behaves. So they don't know how to behave. So yes, it must play a role. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

The teachers used metaphors to describe their work which reflects their conception of professional identity. The nature of a metaphor is such that it presents a complex situation in symbolic form which then needs interpretation within a context[121] (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 926, 927). A single metaphor used by a teacher can simultaneously reveal both positive and negative aspects of her or his work. Some of the metaphors expressed by the teachers reveal a solid and secure ideal identity: a teacher who sees her/himself as motivated, purposeful and effective. Other metaphors hint at a fragmenting identity, an identity under threat: a teacher who sees dangers confronting her/his work.

In this section I examine the teachers' description of a fragile identity in more depth. In addition to responding to questions, I asked the teachers who participated in the study to think of one metaphor to describe their own identity as a teacher and then another one to describe their school and their role in it. I also asked them to draw, if they were willing, how they see themselves as teachers. All three of these tasks required a figurative representation of themselves, their school and their work. Their responses provide rich detail about their beliefs and experiences. In this section I show: the positives and the negatives; the motivating, energising, morale-boosting parts of teaching identity as well as its de-motivating, enervating, morale-sapping parts. I then show how this ambivalence and uncertain, unstable identity is held together by the strong beliefs and professional practices of quality teachers and supportive school cultures. Lastly, I identify factors at work fracturing the teachers' identity as well as the factors that hold and sustain the identity, despite the severest attempts to break it.

[121] See chapter 3.3.2 and footnote109 (p.88).

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The teacher who sees herself as "the warm sun", implies that she is essential for growth as well as providing comfort and security. Each day learners anticipate her impact on their lives. She does not scorch or burn harshly but is warm and supports a congenial atmosphere for development. She is very important; without her, growth is retarded. Other metaphors along similar lines include: "A black eagle: a flying eagle that can hunt for its young and always protect them. Teach them how to hunt and survive the wilderness" (FG3/22/08/07). Here the aspect of journeying with the learner is emphasised. The teacher comes alongside the learner and teaches him or her what is essential for growth and survival in a difficult adult world. A teacher is: "A person who goes on a journey with learners to explore the world of thinking, feeling and doing" (LO teacher, FG4/06/09/07). Teachers frequently see themselves as parents, the responsible ideal kind, performing the role of inducting the young into the adult world and supporting and nurturing in the process: "I think I am a parent, a hardworking person, dedicated, and also prepared to achieve more and help the young generation to grow" (FG3/22/08/07). Identities are vibrant and powerful; they focus on leadership and releasing of potential: "The bright comet that leads the way for shooting stars" (FG1/08/08/07).

These metaphors imply so much more about their conceptions of teacher identity than is obvious at first reading. The "sun" shows the teacher's belief that the profession is essential. Without teachers no-one will grow and flourish: life will cease. The "flying eagle" is also a powerful choice: it indicates the loftiness, the awesomeness of the king of birds, dangerous, powerful and mighty, worthy of respect but at the same time protective and nurturing. The "traveller on a journey" of exploration implies the excitement, anticipation and fascination of learning and stimulating curiosity and investigation. The "parent" identity shows teachers' love for their "children", their commitment and their protective defence to the extent of self-sacrifice. The "comet" metaphor implies teachers' understanding that they unlock limitless potential that will empower/energise the learners to achieve successes that will surpass the achievements of their teachers.

In the above metaphors, teachers see themselves as confident, stable, reliable, trustworthy and supportive. They are available for their learners: to offer support, security and refuge: "I am like Church Square: if you have trouble, you come to me, I'm always available!" (FG2/15/08/07). The metaphor "a tree in the desert" (FG2/15/08/07) expresses a similar idea.

The primary work of teaching: conveying knowledge from one generation to the next and stimulating curiosity, creativity and thinking is captured in the metaphors of the teacher as: "knowledge information tanks" (FG3/22/08/07) and a "stimulator" (FG4/06/09/07). Teachers

WitsETD

transmit knowledge and make it explicit. One teacher sees herself as "like a magician", a professional, with particular knowledge that she manifests in a live and attention-holding performance that has an amazing outcome (the lesson) (FG2/15/08/07). There are some similarities between the teacher and a magician but there is also an essential difference. Unlike magicians she gives away her knowledge: the secrets of achieving the amazing outcome, so that the audience can actually use the knowledge for themselves; it is not kept secret for the magician's use only. A teacher's work is to impart knowledge in an exciting way that empowers the learners to use it themselves. One could say that unlike other professions (possibly the medical or legal) who keep their knowledge "secret" from their clients and "sends the audience home baffled by his/her cleverness", the work of teachers requires them to make their art transparent:

> Sometimes I feel like a magician, trying to pull understanding and passion out of a hat. The response from the crowd is flattering, but there is always the tension of 'Will it work?'. I'm not saying my teaching is based on subterfuge or tricks, rather it is revealing the magic of literature to the audience who hopefully will never be quite the same afterwards. Whereas the magician sends the audience home baffled by his/her cleverness, as teachers we get to unmask the magic and make it accessible to all, thus hopefully spreading it! (FG1/08/08/07)

The teacher identities explored above show that these teachers are: confident in their ability to achieve the purposes of education: they feel they have the knowledge, a sense of purpose and the drive to accomplish it, trustworthiness, consistency and resilience to persist in the face of difficulties, and are supportive of and empathetic towards their learners. Considerable strength is evident in these identities.

On the other hand some of the metaphors and the drawings the teachers gave me suggest ambivalence and fragmentation. They indicate that the strength evident above is constantly threatened by processes in the environment that deplete energy and fracture identity.

The metaphor: "a shining diamond lost in the sand" (FG2/15/08/07) depicts the teacher as a professional person of value, a jewel, that ought to be treasured, but the reality is that the jewel has been (carelessly) lost. The worth of teachers is no longer appreciated. This happens when the teacher feels not looked after carefully or not treasured. In what follows I discuss the meanings that emerge from the metaphors used by the teachers to signify threat and danger.

When the teacher states: "I sometimes feel like the Energiser Bunny" (FG1/08/08/07) she describes an extremely busy teacher who is expending energy as she goes about her work with

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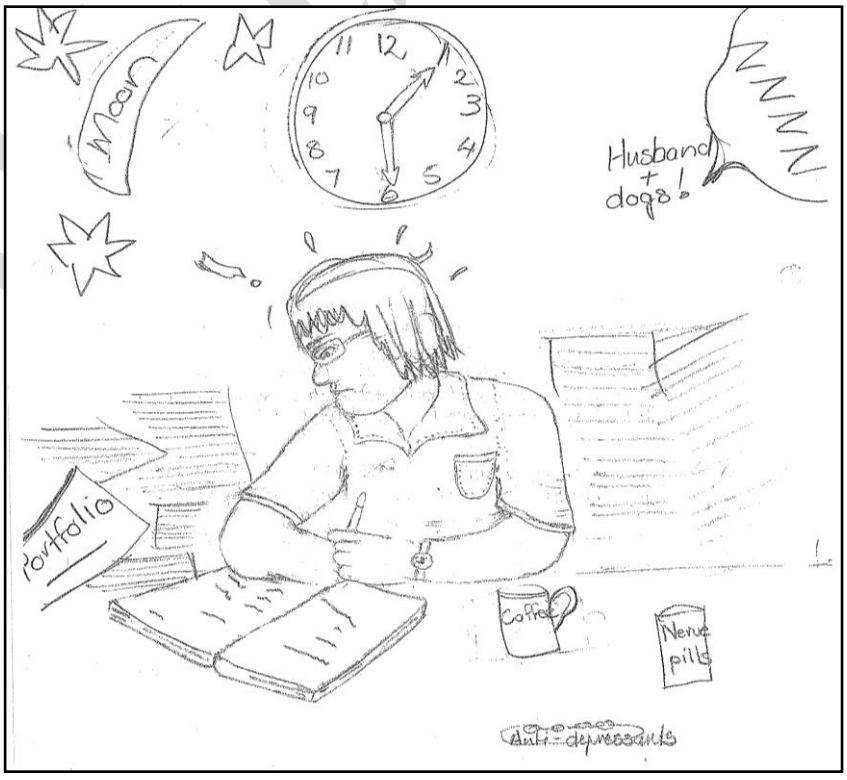
enthusiasm. However, when she continues by saying: "– always running and busy and enthusiastic but eventually the battery runs out and needs to be re-charged", she points to the amount of energy required to do the job and the reality of the potential for exhaustion, excessive stress and burnout, amongst the most committed. The depletion of the energy source is evident in the metaphor provided by an older, somewhat disillusioned and cynical teacher when she says: "I used to be something else. Now I am a sinking ship" (FG2/15/08/07). This teacher perceives herself as sinking, of losing what she once was sure of. Interesting to note, however, notwithstanding the sense of depletion, the teacher seeks a source of energy (the learners): "Oh nice – my 11s are with me now and I told them this question and one said 'Ma'am you are like a tree in the desert'" (FG2/15/08/07). This positive response affirms her worth, and, in fact, confirms that earlier sense of strength, the "something else" she spoke of.

The teachers' drawings of how they see themselves as teachers reflect their multiple roles, the demanding expectations of them, the heavy and intensifying workload that encroaches on their personal lives and the internal conflict they experience in the execution of their daily work. There are both positive and negative factors present simultaneously. The drawings depict their weariness, their split loyalties between their private and school lives and their ambivalent attitude towards their teaching responsibilities: they love the learners and the classroom but struggle with the administration and external accountability demands.

Drawing 1 - "Workhorse" (FG4/06/09/07)



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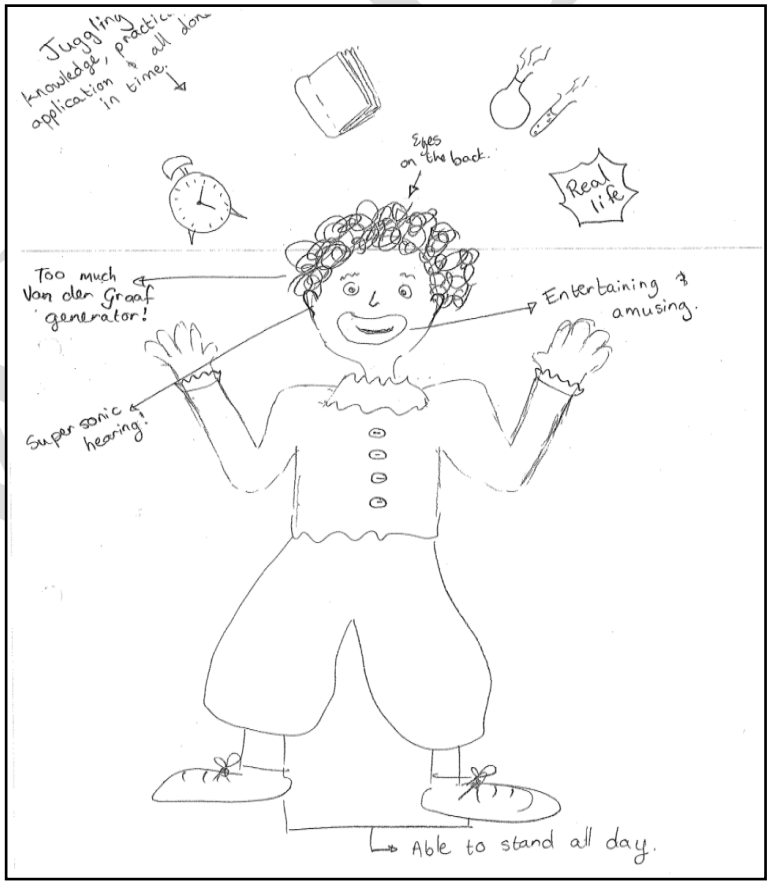
Let us examine Drawing 1 above more closely: the sheer hard work (piles of books and papers, including portfolios to be attended to) and long hours (the moon is shining and it is half past one in the morning), neglect of family (husband and dogs already asleep) and reliance on stimulants and medication involved in the exercise of a teacher's duties are reflected in this drawing.

This teacher calls herself a "Workhorse" and her drawing indicates what work she has to do as well as the consequences of the workload for her, personally: she shows the signs of excessive stress, depression and burn-out, an unhealthy and unbalanced life-style. The metaphor implies the notion of being controlled or directed by someone or something else. The control does not reside with the teacher. She has merely to do the bidding of the driver and do so tirelessly without complaint until the end of her useful working life. This metaphor is a far cry from the proud, confident, powerfully enabled professional teacher.

The extraordinary demands on teachers are evident in the drawing below.

Drawing 2 - "The entertainer" (FG1/08/08/07)



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In this drawing a science teacher depicts herself as an entertainer clown managing aspects of her job. Meeting the curriculum demands of conveying knowledge as well as applying it practically within time constraints requires juggling. She has to do this in a manner that entertains while always being alert to possible discipline challenges: eyes in the back of her head and "super-sonic hearing". The fact that the job is tiring is implied in the feet labelled "Able to stand all day". The sense is of a weary, stretched teacher who nevertheless is still committed to her work and who has not lost a sense of humour: "Too much van der Graaff generator!". The juggling notion is evident also in Drawing 3 below which depicts the teacher as high-wire skating Superwoman. Here the teacher handles each ball in turn and manages to keep everything going and under control but with great skill, effort and concentration and under testing conditions (the high-wire balancing act). This identity illustrates the reality of teachers' work: the expectation that a teacher should effortlessly perform many functions and roles. The juggler identity conveys a warning within it. The fact that the act of juggling cannot go on indefinitely is an indication that teachers cannot continue performing these multiple functions without something suffering. The juggler will drop a ball or collapse from fatigue. It takes Superwoman to be able to do everything expected of a teacher. The bystander's remark "Oh anyone can do that, especially if you have a half day job!" reflects the way this teacher experiences the work of teachers not being understood or valued by the general public. The superhuman effort needed is severely underestimated.

Drawing 3 - "Superwoman" (FG1/08/08/07)



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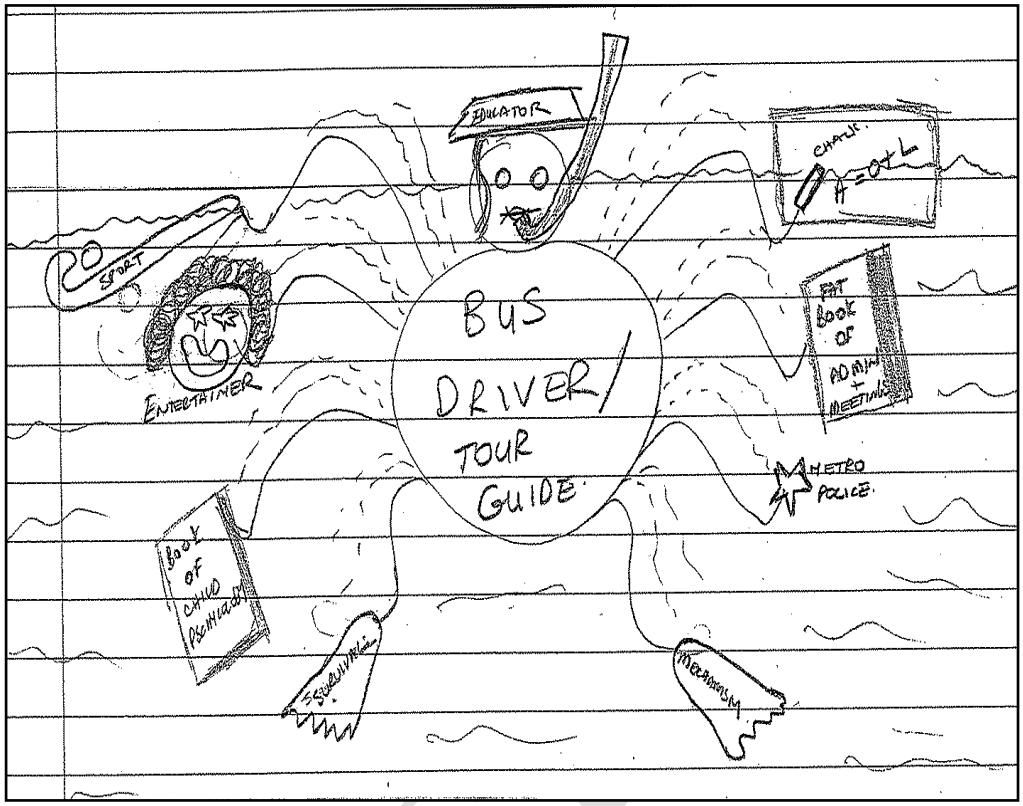
Drawings 4 and 5 of teachers as an "octopus" or a "multi-armed juggler" highlight teachers' perceptions of the intensification of their work and the multiple tasks they perform.

Drawing 4 - "The octopus" (FG1/08/08/07)

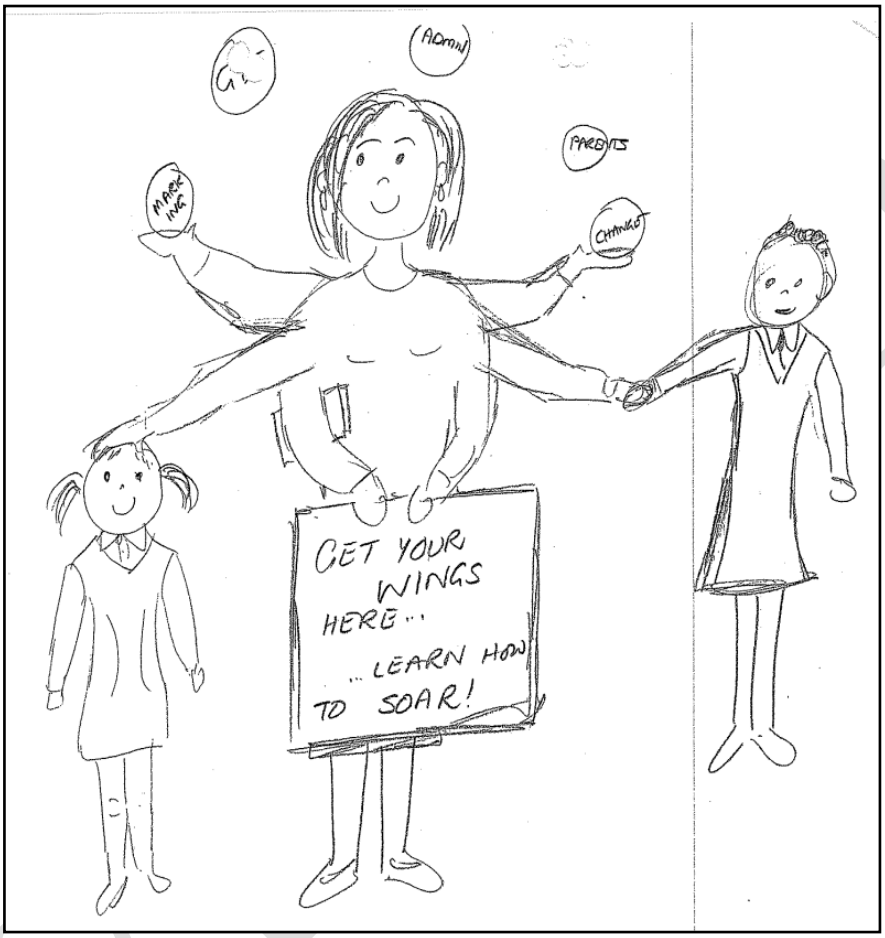


This teacher performs many roles besides being an educator. The fact that she is wearing a mortar board marked "educator" does not mean it is the only 'hat' she wears. She performs reasonably expected teaching roles as a subject teacher, administrator, meeting attendee and discipline officer. In addition, however, she coaches sport (and drives the bus and takes learners on tour), entertains and tries to understand children's needs and problems. To do all this she is equipped with a snorkel so that she can come up for air when the load is just too overwhelming, and the flippers on two of the tentacles, labelled "survival mechanism", enable her to keep swimming. These items imply the difficulty the teacher has fulfilling these roles. The "octopus" image reflects teachers' stressed identity. This many-tentacled creature reflects the multiple roles and duties of teachers which require their having more than a mere two hands. They have to multi-task in order to cope with the simultaneous demands. There is no chance of completing them one at a time.

Having just two hands is not enough to cope with the work as Drawing 5 below shows. This multiple-armed teacher is still juggling the demands of the GDE, marking, administration, parents and change, while at the same time holding firmly to her belief in the purpose of her

work: “GET YOUR WINGS HERE ... LEARN HOW TO SOAR!” She has a spare hand to guide and support a learner and another one to encourage and yet, she smiles. The smile on the face of the teacher indicates that despite these demands made on her she enjoys working with the learners and helping them to achieve great things.

Drawing 5 - “Multi-armed juggler” (FG1/08/08/07)



The heavy workload and multiple roles teachers play are consistent features in the drawings but a number of drawings show two sides to the teacher’s work. One teacher submitted a drawing of himself working at a desk with a pile of books and a pillow behind his back but also attached it to a photograph of a friendly smiling teacher sitting beside a learner assisting with his work, suggesting the reality and the ideal.

Drawing 6 below shows the teacher resolutely persevering with his pile of work: preparing, marking and so on. He is shown in isolation. This aspect of the work is solitary and thus denies the teacher the succour and energy he could derive from collegial activity or interaction with learners. His submission of the second picture points to what he would ideally like to be: a happy, caring, supportive, patient teacher with enough time to give attention to learners on an

individual basis. It is such interaction which provides satisfaction, confirms their purpose and energises teachers.

Drawing 6 – "Fact and fantasy" (FG4/06/09/08)



The ambivalence teachers feel about their work and the fact that so often they experience both positive and negative emotions is depicted in the Drawing 7 below. Two sides to this teacher are portrayed. The upper drawing shows a teacher of English greeting her learners cheerfully, implying a mutually positive and energising relationship. Her smiling face indicates the happiness and pleasure she derives from conveying her passion and knowledge of her subject to appreciative learners, whether it is Shakespearean literature or basic grammar. She holds a visual aid, a skull (representative of Yorick in *Hamlet),* to support her teaching of Shakespeare. The wry expression on the face of the teacher in the lower drawing is in response to the personal stress of traffic on her way to and from work and her pondering on the troublesome issue of salary which does not reflect her worth. The DoE courses which this teacher finds a waste of time (opinion expressed in the interview) and the administration work contribute to feelings that are a mixture of unhappiness and cynicism.

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Drawing 7 - “English teacher” (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)



Teachers’ exhaustion and intensity must be seen in relation to the sense of professional criteria of work ethics that they express. Teachers are expected to display high ethical and performance standards in their personal and professional lives: “I think as a professional you want to call yourself a professional. There’s certain criteria you have to adhere to” (FG4/06/09/07) and “Certain standards must be met – if you are able to meet them then you are a professional” (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). A professional teacher is disciplined: “First thing, I nag about being on time in my class, being here before my learners. That to me is being professional” (FG4/06/09/07) and “They are clinical about their work” (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). He has to be responsible in the execution of his work: “When I’ve marked an assignment, give it back to them as soon as possible” (FG4/06/09/07). This includes putting pressure on oneself to deliver quality service to the clients: “That’s just … work ethic to me it goes with being professional. And if I’ve lapsed one day, tomorrow I must catch up” (FG4/06/09/07) and

"Professionals go the extra mile" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). Hence, in their personal conduct and relationships teachers are required to be exemplary. They role model high standards of respect and generally behave correctly at all times.

> I think [being] professional has a lot to do with the way you present yourself, the way you speak to the children, the way you speak to your colleagues, the way you behave actually. (FG2/15/08/07)

> A professional is somebody who understands that this is a very responsible job and does everything in their power to meet their obligations. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

To sum up, in relation to criteria of ethics, these teachers feel that they have to be entirely honest and trustworthy. Integrity is the hall-mark of their sense of professionalism.

The teachers attempt to draw distinctions between what is essential and what is less essential to professional identity. Their professional identity is threatened when the pre-conditions are threatened and the focus of the work, teaching, is lost in multiple demands: "I became an educator to help and develop and not to do admin. Teaching always comes first" (FG4/06/09/07). The love and passion for the work are present: "I would never not want to be a teacher because I think I'm a damn good teacher" but the secure identity "damn good teacher" is being threatened: "But there are things that make you not want to be a teacher" by an increasing number of these factors, "and those things are becoming more and they're becoming worse" (FG2/15/08/07). In her description of "a professional" and "professional conduct" a teacher draws attention to something she has omitted: "Notice I don't talk about keeping your things tidy and that's because that's the thing I battle with the most [laughs]. And the more I try to file things, the worse it gets" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07). She deliberately leaves this aspect of her work out of the description because for her it is troublesome and non-essential work. It does not contribute to the delivery of quality education or being a better professional. With all the demands on her that contribute to intensifying her work leading to exhaustion she has decided what is worth spending time on and what is not. Both these teachers reject performing work for the sake of *form*, giving an outward impression of being "professional" but essentially unimportant to the delivery of quality education. Perhaps the spontaneous reflection on her management of files is a result of the guilt induced because of the pre-occupation and emphasis placed on accountability measures that call for the demonstration of the *form*. She wants to focus instead on the *substance* of professionalism, the essentials and the important aspects of being "a professional". A professional teacher, she argues, respects her clients and colleagues:

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> I'm going to start with the learners again. A professional doesn't humiliate learners. A professional does everything in the best interest of the learner. I always say, a doctor isn't angry with his patient when he's ill. And a teacher should not be angry with a pupil because he's stupid. That's a horrible word to use but you know what I mean. A professional is somebody who doesn't get personal with the learners in a negative way. A professional is a person who would never gossip about learners. I hate gossiping and people who gossip about learners, and they wouldn't gossip about other staff members either. They would treat other staff members with respect. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

In sum, these teachers feel enabled to deliver the substance of professionalism but when external appraisers focus on the form they feel constrained. The teachers' range of experiences can build or break their professional identity. When their experiences are in conflict with their beliefs about their purpose and the social value of their work their identity is fragmented. Their strength comes from satisfying relationships with their learners and the belief and experience of doing meaningful work but this is threatened by the multiple roles they are expected to fulfil and intensification of their work.

In the next section I shall show the beliefs of teachers that help to hold their identity intact despite the increasing number of factors that are fragmenting their secure identity.

4.1.2 Beliefs that "glue" the fragmented identity together

The teachers' deliberate choice of the profession is a strong factor securing their identity. They believe and know they have made the right decision. They have weighed alternatives and studied the benefits of other jobs but their passion and commitment to the primary work of a teacher drives them. A teacher describes her background and her deliberate choice to pursue her passion despite opposition:

> I come from a family of teachers, and then when I wanted to teach, my grandfather was very upset. He said you may never say that you're not paid enough because I tell you now you will never be paid for what you do. And still I wanted to do it and I think today if I have to make a choice, I will make a choice again. There was quite a few years that I've done other things, made a lot of money, and I came back, because this is my passion. (FG2/15/08/07)

The choice of career is made with full knowledge of the reality. They choose to become teachers and encourage others to do so: "Yes, although I do emphasise that it is not an easy profession!" (FG1/08/08/07).

The teachers believe in the value of teachers. They believe that they are essential for the development of the next generation: "Who will teach their children if you don't encourage

WISETD

them to become teachers?" (FG3/22/08/07). Without teachers there will be no other professions "This profession gave birth to all the professions that we have" (FG3/22/08/07). They believe they serve a most important purpose.

It is clear that the teachers' beliefs about the purpose of their work sustains and enables them to deliver quality teaching. They regard the development of young people as their primary and most fulfilling purpose. Being instrumental in helping a troubled learner, turning her life around and making a difference in even a single life is fulfilling:

> If I see kids today putting up their pictures, asking questions about the icons that they've chosen or in the Afrikaans class talking about the choices that they've made and they're so honest and they're so open about … one of the girls … maybe I shouldn't say but … she went on a roller coaster and she has decided a few months back this must stop now. No more this, no more that, she must come back onto the narrow road. And they share and you see the growth and on EEC camp this coming weekend also you … I love seeing and I still believe I can make a difference, even if it's only one guy. (FG2/15/08/07)

Seeing the impact they have in their learners' lives is experienced as immensely purposeful and rewarding: "You just find that happiness. It makes you like to grow ... and also that you are making an impact in that person's life because you are making a change in that person's life" (FG3/22/08/07) which is also viewed as a contribution to the development of the country "And what I'm teaching is having an impact on me to see at least learners, or the children developing into engineers so I enjoy developing them you're getting them ready to do engineering and the country needs engineers" (FG3/22/08/07).

Teachers' experiences that provide professional satisfaction serve to "glue" fragmented identity together and boost morale: "Seeing children starting to understand and love my subject" (FG2/15/08/07); "Interacting with learners on a daily basis gives me satisfaction" (FG3/22/08/07). Even when society at large does not recognise the importance of their work the teachers experience professional satisfaction when they believe that they have developed and educated a learner and launched him or her on the path to a successful career: "You know shaping somebody's mind is a very difficult task to do. So for the fact that you shaped other people's mind, you're great. I don't care what other people are saying. This profession gave birth to all the professions that we have, and it's still doing" (FG3/22/08/07). When they successfully transmit their passion for learning or for a subject they are intrinsically rewarded: "Seeing a burgeoning love of English lit[erature] in my learners – their feedback"

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(FG1/08/08/07). They are confident of the worth of what they are doing and feel professionally satisfied. They have accomplished their professional purpose.

Opportunities for experiencing professional satisfaction arise largely in the classroom. It is when they are actually teaching, interacting and relating to learners behind their classroom doors that the teachers experience their work as professionally rewarding: "working in the classroom imparting knowledge and skills", (FG3/22/08/07); "being in the classroom, passion for the subject, and interaction with learners" (FG1/08/08/07). Satisfaction depends on the quality and effectiveness of the relationships and interaction: "... explained and taught an interesting lesson with the cooperation from pupils" (FG2/15/08/07); "When a learner gives me positive feedback I feel most satisfied" (FG1/08/08/07); "good relationships with learners ... gives me satisfaction" (FG3/22/08/07) and makes the difference for teachers. These teachers invest heavily in strengthening their relationships and promoting effective interaction which increases their professional satisfaction.

More particularly, teachers' sense of professional satisfaction is closely linked to a sense of achievement of the learners: "seeing learners' success" (FG4/06/09/07). Their satisfaction is not self-indulgent, merely for the pleasure of it, but stems from doing what they believe is a good professional job, achieving the learning outcomes: "Aha moments" (FG1/08/08/07); "When learners 'get it' or achieve [whether it be inside or out of the classroom], seeing growth" (FG2/15/08/07), and "interacting with learners and helping them achieve their goals" (FG4/06/09/07).

Experiences that contribute to professional satisfaction boost the morale of teachers. This is the "glue" of fragmented identity. The identity of these teachers does not rely on large financial rewards: "When you are working, you are working towards the common goal that you want to finish it as a goal, so you don't have to think about money (FG3/22/08/07)" but the intrinsic rewards are significant. When a teacher has an internal sense of having accomplished a successful professional job he or she considers this a reward: "And whatever is on your mind is getting those learners on the road that you want them to be until the end. If you can get them to where you want them to be, then that is a reward" (FG3/22/08/07). The reward "comes from within" (FG3/22/08/07).

The main source of opportunities for professional satisfaction as has been shown above is the classroom, however, teachers do their work in the context of a whole school with its unique systems and culture. It is therefore important to explore the extent to which the teachers'

WisETD

personal and professional identity and the rewards they experience from their work are intimately connected to their perceptions of how their school functions and the role they play in it. The discussion below will show that the teachers believe that a supportive school culture enables them to do their work in a way that their identity conceives it. These perceptions can be inferred too from the drawings and metaphors that teachers used to reveal their beliefs.

When the metaphor the teacher chooses to describe the school is predominantly positive it suggests that the teacher has a clear sense of her identity. This kind of metaphor suggests that the teacher can cope with the complexities and challenges (what she interprets as the negative aspects) of her work; she feels enabled and empowered to do her job – to play her role in the school because she depends on collegial relationships and does not try to be independent. Largely negative metaphors reflect teachers' feelings of being constrained in their workplace. Their identity is threatened: they are unable to use the "glue" to preserve their fragmented identity.

In the excerpt below a teacher reveals a strong, autonomous identity coupled with an understanding of interdependence and accountability.

> [The school is] sort of like a harbour, or a safe port. But I think I'm in my own little ship, going out on my own little voyage of discovery. But I can captain my ship …Yes, I've got people on board, maybe my department, my learners, whoever I'm coming into contact with ... The sea might be calm, it might be choppy. But you've also got your navigation people at the harbour or your lighthouse bringing you back. (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07)

The image is of a secure identity because of how the teacher frames her understanding of professional identity. She has a degree of independence but relates to colleagues in a mutually beneficial and supportive way. This relational and dependent nature of a secure teacher identity is evident in the metaphor of a family: "The staff is like family" (FG2/15/08/07) [the assumption is that it is a functional family]. The implications of this are that a supportive school environment nurtures and develops the teacher in a manner that builds the teacher. Other images also imply being part of a bigger whole and playing one's role for the sake of the success of the whole, again emphasising the relational and dependent identity. These teachers see themselves as part of a successful school, rich with opportunities for excelling: "A galaxy of shooting stars with endless possibilities" (FG1/08/08/07) and as participants in a challenging team event: "I see the school as a cycle race and we are individual cyclists (as part of a team) striving for success" (FG1/08/08/07).

WitsETD

The “glue” of teacher identity is revealed in the following two metaphors of a tree and a beehive. These teachers’ sense of purposefulness of their work, their sense of professional satisfaction and the relational and dependent nature of their identity are all evident in the metaphors. The school is a safe but exciting, busy and changing home to people: “A large old tree (deciduous) that is constantly changing - spring blossoms, summer leaves, autumn leaves and drop leaves in winter. Lots of animals live in the tree and depend on the tree for food – a busy eco system” (FG1/08/08/07) and “A quick picture of a beehive - there’s lots of activity, things are happening and things are being produced but everybody’s in and out. They know what they have to do in order to produce the honey or whatever the case is, they’re just really busy” (FG1/08/08/07). These metaphors show a positive and secure identity. The teacher is part of a supportive community that is joined in a common purpose. Each teacher has his or her function which contributes to the successful accomplishment of the purpose. The images convey liveliness, enthusiasm and excitement that is goal-directed. The overwhelming picture is of collegial teachers with a secure identity and high level of morale and strong sense of purpose.

In sum, the beliefs that strengthen professional identity and hold it together, include: the belief that the right career choice has been made because one can exercise one’s passion; the belief that teachers serve a critical function in the development of the country and make a difference in the lives of individual learners; the experience of intrinsic reward in the form of professional satisfaction; and the sustaining power of collegiality and direction provided by supportive school cultures. These beliefs are, however, continuously threatened by factors that work in an opposite direction and destructively threaten teacher identity.

Drawing 8 below sums up on the left-hand side a portrayal of the “glue” that binds the fragmented identity: the sense of purpose, professional satsfaction and connectedness. While the right-hand side identifies the factors that threaten this identity: the intensification of work, the lack of respect for teachers and insufficient support. In the next section I discuss the factors that threaten the “glue” of fragmented identity, the sustaining beliefs of teachers.

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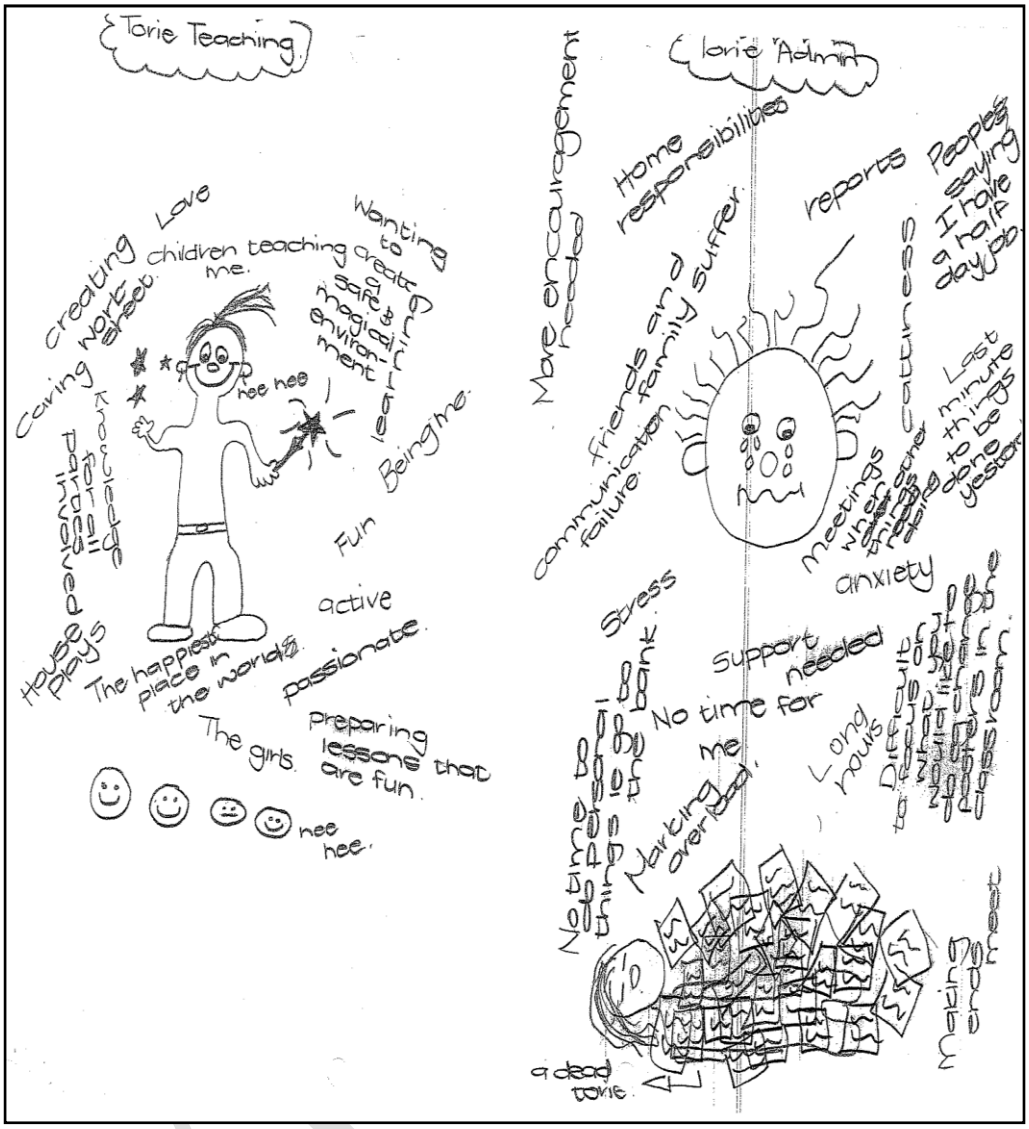
Drawing 8 – "Stuck and unstuck" (FG1/08/08/07)



4.1.3 Factors that contribute towards the breaking down of teacher identity

In this section I examine more closely the factors that the teachers believe contribute towards their frustration. Deliberating on the idea of contractual obligations this section emphasises that the source of the teachers' frustration is the feeling that the basic obligations of the different parties to the contract are not fulfilled.

Teachers' work has a contractual aspect to it: in exchange for doing their work, namely, delivering quality education, teachers expect the employer's demands to be reasonable; to be treated with respect by society at large, including the learners, parents, colleagues and education officials; to be supported in doing their work, and lastly, teachers expect that learners exercise the required discipline and work ethic. The breaching of any of these contractual elements undermines the contract and leads to negative feelings and frustrations. In terms of

professional identity, these feelings and experiences bring about what I call the breakdown of teacher identity.

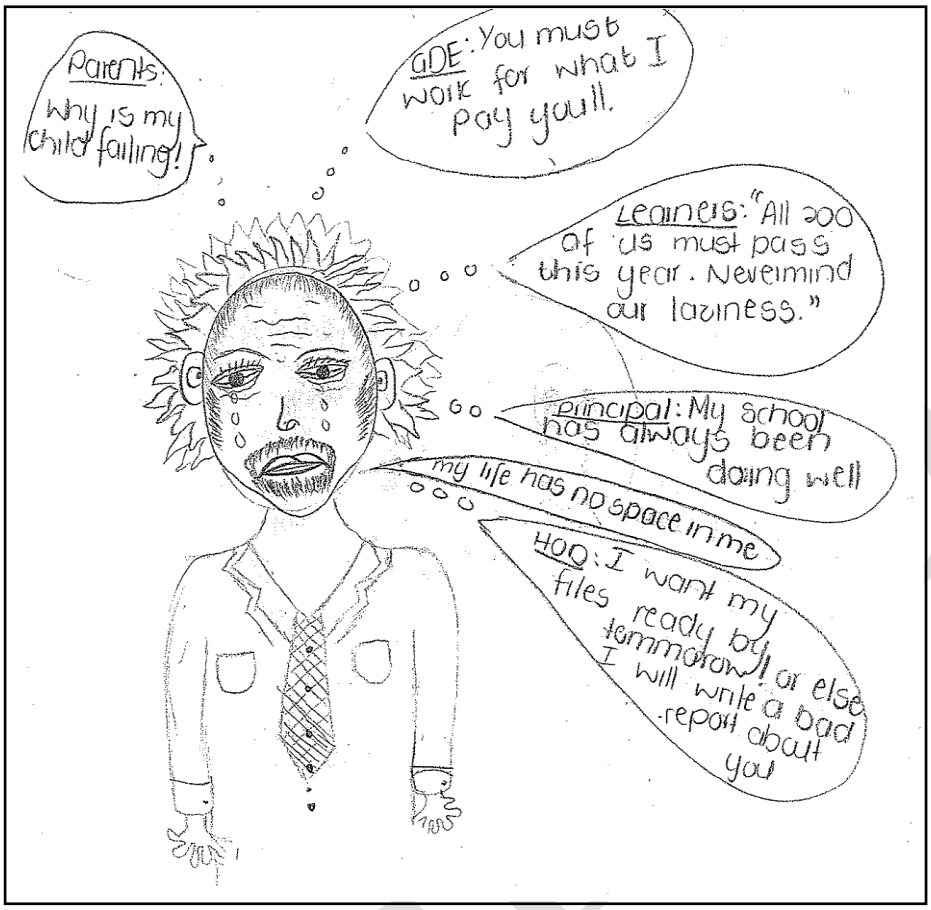
The metaphor of a snail depicts most of the factors that the teachers identify as destructive. In the extract below the teacher identifies the factors that do not work to hold intact the contractual basis of his job. He travels alone. He has a heavy workload that he bears alone and which weighs him down. It is taking him many hours and he feels as if he might not cope. He does not appear to be enjoying the work he is doing, other than seeking to achieve the goal of completion; the work does not appear meaningful. He receives no support in his sole endeavour (there are no supportive colleagues, parents or education department officials and the learners do not take responsibility for bearing their part of the load).

> The immediate thing that came to mind was a snail. With this huge shell and it was like moving slowly, and it's like, oh it's going so slowly and I'm in close contact with the ground and this shell is just so heavy and it's going forward and it's going forward and I've got to get to that water because if I don't get there by sunset I'm going to perish. [Laughs] That's quite interesting because I don't view this school as slow moving. (FG1/08/08/07)

The teachers see themselves as having entered a contract with society/parents, the government/their employer, the GDE, to deliver quality teaching to learners. Each party needs to play its part, an idea consistent with Winch's (1996) notion of "mutual obligation" (p. 2). If teachers do not uphold professional standards of quality, if they do not do their jobs properly, if the society and the government do not support the educational goals by ensuring respect for the teachers, paying them appropriately and ensuring learner discipline and if learners do not carry out the tasks associated with learning in a responsible way and do not buy into educational objectives, then the positive, solid identity that enables the delivery of quality education to occur is in grave danger. In the drawing below, the teacher expresses distress, which is directed mainly at the role players who do not uphold their side of the contract.

WitsETD

Drawing 9 - "Distressed teacher" (FG3/22/08/07)



The male teacher in Drawing 9 above with his hair raised and tears rolling down his face is clearly stressed and unable to cope with the demands from all stakeholders: "Parents – why is my child failing?"; "GDE – you must work for what I pay you!!"; "Learners – all 200 of us must pass this year, never mind our laziness"; "Principal – my school has always been doing well"; "HOD – I want your files ready by tomorrow! Or else I will write a bad report about you"; "my life has no space in me [my life has no space in it for me]" (FG3/22/08/07).

Teachers' professional identity is formed around the type of work that teachers believe should be done by teachers. Teachers have "contracted" to perform a particular type of work under particular conditions. However, the nature of teachers' work has changed and this has presented an enormous challenge but also deep frustration, with some teachers wondering whether they can remain in the profession. The frustrations that are undermining morale and making the profession of teaching less meaningful and less fulfilling are increasing: "I would never not want to be a teacher because I think I'm a damn good teacher. But there are things that make you not want to be a teacher. And *those things* [my emphasis] are becoming more and they're becoming worse" (FG2/15/08/07).

The teachers reflect on the changing nature of their work. In the following quotation a teacher begins to identify "those things" referred to above, that is, aspects of the job that are different from the past. The nature of a teacher's job has changed over the years: "When I started teaching, teaching was not what it is now. I loved teaching when I started teaching" (FG2/15/08/07). For this teacher the problem is the change of attitude towards teachers: "just the whole approach, the whole attitude has changed" (FG2/15/08/07).

Other examples of "those things" can be identified in the following quotation. The indiscipline of the learners, the bureaucratic administrative demands of education department officials as well as the school hierarchy, and uncertainty are factors that are becoming increasingly prevalent and unwanted aspects of teachers' work. By lacking understanding (sympathy) they breach the contract of what teachers believe their work ought to be.

> I was saying to someone the other day, it's a three-pronged fork. I couldn't handle the kids because they're bloody impossible. The kids are impossible, so the kids are impossible. You know what, the powers that be with all the paperwork is really stressing me out, they're bloody impossible. Now I realise it's like he's just said, it's because of these forms that have to be filled in triplicate ten times a day. So our school hierarchy is bloody impossible as well. And then on top of that the department is impossible. The department with their demands and curriculums and uncertainties for us is impossible. There is not one of those three, from children to senior staff to… [the education department] that one feels, well, at least they understand. (FG2/15/08/07)

A further example of "those things" that are changing the nature of the work is given in the excerpt below which shows how teachers experience challenges from learners. Formerly their professional judgment was respected but now it is different:

> I think especially the children question a lot more nowadays than what they would have in the past. And quite often will get into an argument about stuff where children in the past would have accepted you as a teacher that your judgement was correct. That yes, has definitely changed. (FG2/15/08/07)

According to this teacher, the right and the ability to exercise professional judgment, an implied essential trait of professional identity, are under threat.

The quotations above suggest that the teachers experience challenges that come from all fronts: the NDE, especially in the form of policy, the GDE officials' interpretation, implementation and monitoring of it, learners, parents, colleagues, school management, and even the broader community.

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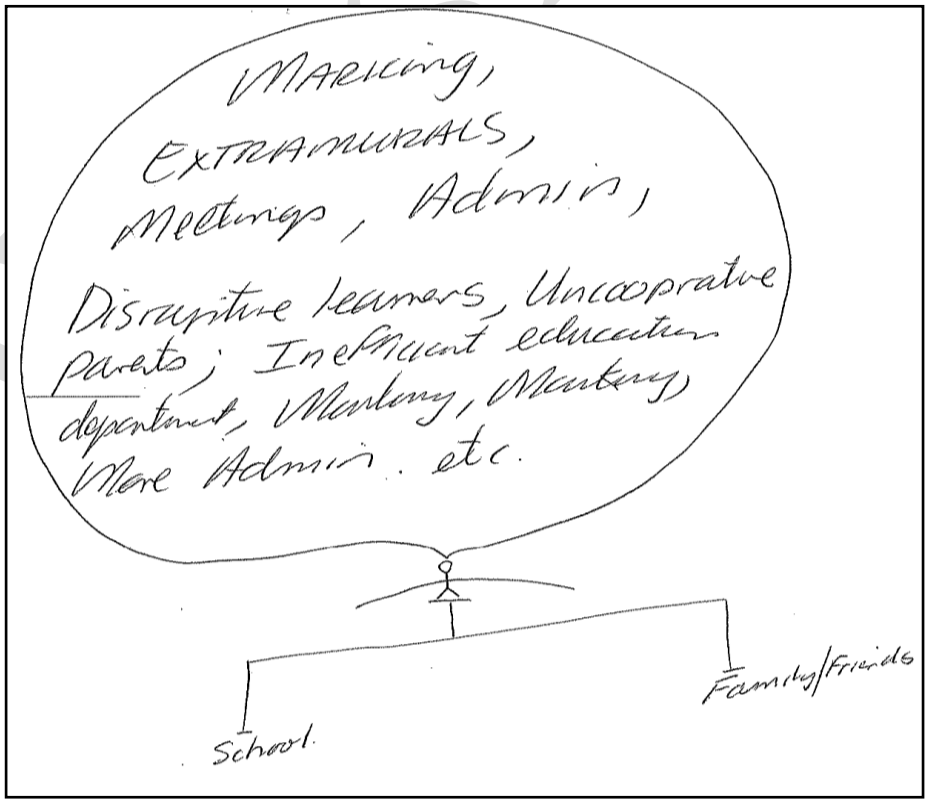
The teachers expect a balance between work and private life but with today's experience of the workload they experience difficulty balancing the two. Drawing 10 below depicts the balancing act performed on a daily basis. The drawing shows the teacher with a balancing beam walking on a tight rope between "school" and "family/friends". He is heavily laden with further examples of "those things" that are changing the nature of his work. This teacher experiences his diverse workload as tricky to manage and still have a personal life. What comprises the workload is worth noting. Other than "marking" none of the traditional teaching tasks are mentioned. The teacher foregrounds "marking, extra-murals, admin., disruptive learners, uncooperative parents; inefficient education department, marking, marking, more admin. etc" (FG2/15/08/07).

The tension teachers experience in their attempts to balance their professional and personal lives is implied in this drawing. The weight the tightrope walker bears slows him down and hampers his crossing the tightrope to reach the family and friends. He is depicted as small and insignificant compared with the load he carries. The load endangers his welfare and prevents his leading a well-balanced, normal life. He feels he is trapped in a life of perpetual balancing act tricks.

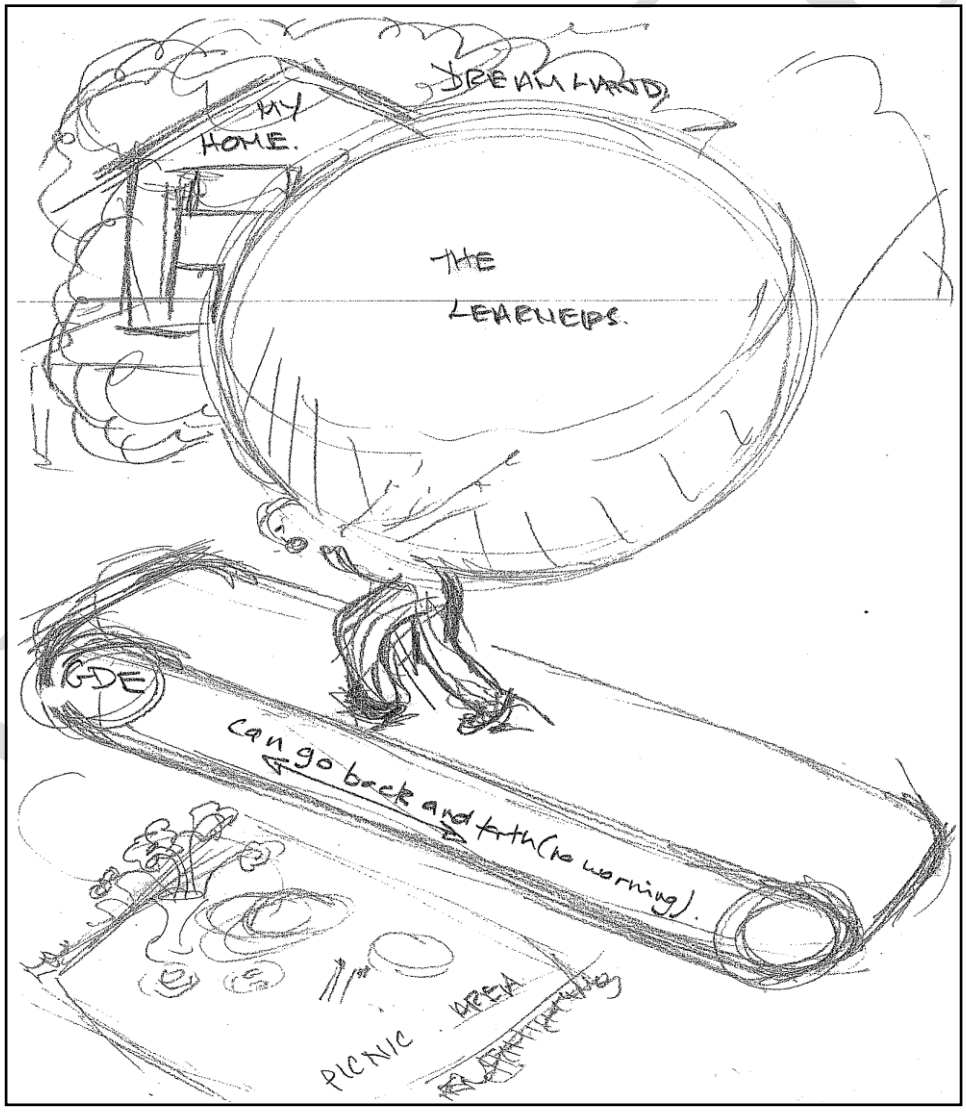
Drawing 10 – "Tightrope walker" (FG2/15/08/07)



The sheer amount of work expected of these teachers causes them to feel overburdened and unable to continue delivering the quality education and performing at the standard that their professional identity demands of them: “The job has the potential to become overwhelming and if I felt I could not cope at the level I want to [I would leave the profession]” (FG1/08/08/07); “How I feel about constantly using all spare time for schoolwork makes me feel resentful and question whether this is what I want for the rest of my life – I need to have time for a husband and family and currently that would never happen!” (FG1/08/08/07).

The intensity and nature of the workload as well as the perceived cause of it is shown in Drawing 11 below.

Drawing 11 - “Treadmill” (FG1/08/08/07)



The teacher sees himself on a treadmill from which I infer that the teacher views his work as unproductive, perhaps even a purposeless endeavour. Not only is he caught on this machine

(labelled/manufactured by the GDE) but it is capricious: it changes direction without warning. The treadmill is marked with a caution "Can go back and forth (no warning)" (FG1/08/08/07). This suggests that the teacher views his employer as unpredictable and constantly changing what it wants from teachers (for example, policies) without warning. While expending energy on the treadmill as well as coping with its unpredictability he carries an extraordinarily heavy burden (a heavy load of learners) that weighs him down, portraying his experience of his increasing workload that he is barely able to manage. He is struggling and near collapse from exhaustion. While he struggles ceaselessly and monotonously with his load of learners which fills most of the drawing he looks grimly (and perhaps longingly) at the restful unoccupied picnic area that he can never enjoy. Behind this scene is the teacher's home in a cloud, labelled "dreamland" representative of the fact that in this present context this teacher's work is never done and his hope of a private life is a dream. In the foreground he shows an attractive picnic area which he is only able to gaze at wistfully while he sweats it out on the treadmill. He does not see himself as being able to enjoy the picnic. From this we can infer that his present life "is no picnic"; it is very arduous.

Emerging from the three previous drawings (Drawings 9, 10 and 11) as well as Drawing 1 are references to the teachers' loss of family time and the stress involved in trying to balance family and work demands. This highlights the changing nature of teachers' work and their experienced sense of breach of contract.

The contractual aspect of teachers' work does not only relate to the purposefulness (or lack thereof) of their work but also to how they are viewed by society. Individually, the teachers interviewed considered themselves as professionals but expressed frustration at not being treated as professionals by colleagues or officials of the education department. They believe there should be mutual respect regardless of the position of the person. Their views should be listened to and their abilities should be acknowledged and respected:

> Or if I say something then immediately you suppress what I'm saying. If we treat each other as equals, even though understanding that you have a position, but let's have that line of communication open and respect [one another]. (FG3/22/08/07)

> Respect should be the spine of everything, acknowledging that people are there because they deserve to be there and they are good at what they are doing. It can add a lot ... if you really respect them and show them that you acknowledge their ability. (FG3/22/08/07)

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Teachers expect their colleagues to be respectful and not abuse their authority whether as a teacher with a management role in the school or whether just a regular classroom teacher.

The teachers believe that they should be regarded more highly because of their professional training. They believe that their salary should reflect this. In the following quotation the teachers reflect on the way the public denigrates teaching as a "real profession":

> And what I find is that parents tend to look down on teachers very often. Let's say a doctor or a lawyer or whatever it may be … they think if you're a teacher you couldn't make it elsewhere. You're stupid. (FG2/15/08/07)

and

> Yes, I think we work very, very hard. It's a choice we made. I understand it very clearly. I made the choice, it's my life. I like that. But if they can get the advantages in the outside world, why can't we? We also go and study, we also do our doctorates and our masters and everything. So what's the difference? And you see that again, flows over to the household. And that's where the image comes from. "Are you going to study for the educator? ... What's wrong with you?" So everybody I (don't) think they don't see teaching as a professional job. Unfortunately. (FG4/06/09/07)

The breaching of the elements of teachers' contractual relationship is felt most by the excessive workload teachers are expected to master. The intensification of work and increasing bureaucratic practices as well as additional challenges stemming from the changing nature of learners and society combined with reduced trust and diminishing respect are felt as an attack. Teachers believe this has resulted in their having to prove that they are doing their work. A multitude of documents needs to be completed to serve as evidence of this: "paperwork and forms" (FG2/15/08/07); "marking" (FG2/15/08/07); "My biggest gripe is forms. All these forms that we have to fill in, constantly fill in … I find that a waste of time" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07); "Endless and excessive paper work" (FG1/08/08/07); "Admin, IQMS, marking" (FG1/08/08/07); "Admin work, that is, filling in forms, assessment, marking" (FG4/06/09/07); and "laborious methods of recording marks" (FG4/06/09/07).

The teachers do not believe they can refuse to carry out these kinds of instructions and bureaucratic practices but they hold themselves accountable for the delivery of quality education. When teachers view carrying out the instruction to be detrimental to quality education there is considerable tension within the teacher: "the stress it puts on me, (FG1/08/08/07); "But it's also not educationally sound sometimes and then I get all frustrated because I don't want to lower my standards to complete (the task)" (FG1/08/08/07). This

WitsETD

predicament is handled differently by teachers but in the scramble, and under a degree of compulsion, to comply with these bureaucratic demands some teachers have adopted deceitful practices (possibly as a survival technique because of the excessive demands). A teacher laughingly says:

> But the other thing I'll say, work on etiquette. You are expected to produce a report and the next thing you see maybe two pages, and underneath those two pages you see magazine, a few pages. I found that now some people have put stacks of magazines underneath their lesson plan just to make the bulge a little bit bigger. [Laughter] They put things like that or your recording of marks, some teachers would be putting up marks and all those things. We shouldn't only be looking at way of life; we should also look at the work ethic, when we're talking professionalism. Mostly I will focus on the work ethic. (FG3/22/08/07)

This kind of dishonesty and unethical behaviour of colleagues stems from the failure of the contractual relationship: the employer demands more than the teacher can deliver so teachers abandon their professional standards and behave as workers waiting to be checked up upon "make the bulge a little bit bigger" to impress the checker. This is seriously destructive of the professional identity of teachers: no longer are they professionals to be trusted to do their work but workers to be supervised and checked up on. The abandonment of professional standards is a serious threat to professional identity and to quality improvement. These ideas are discussed further in chapter 6.2.1, p.169 below.

In sum, the main factors impacting detrimentally on teacher identity, namely: the changing nature of teachers' work, increasing bureaucratic demands resulting in increased workload, undisciplined learners, teacher colleagues who fail to uphold professional standards, and lack of support from authorities and supervisors, have all been shown to influence the morale of teachers. This section has argued that from the teachers' perspective, all these factors contribute to their experience of a breach of contract of the basic conditions of teaching.

4.1.4 Conclusion

This section has shown through the beliefs and experiences of the teachers the ways they perceive their professional identity. The teachers' beliefs and experiences are vividly and realistically conveyed in the responses to questions, in the metaphors that represent their professional identity and their role in their schools and in their drawings through which they depict how they experience teaching in today's school environment. What is evident is that the "teaching self" is fragile. There are factors that hold it together, such as teachers' beliefs about their work, but there are strong forces at work to break it down and destroy it. Amongst these

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teachers, those who are strengthened by their sense of duty, somehow manage to hold onto a fixed identity that can withstand the battering forces and continue their daily work of delivering quality education with purpose, passion and satisfaction.

These teachers understand that their qualifications are a preparation for a unique profession: one of service without the expectation of great extrinsic rewards. Their notion of professional identity is one of servanthood:

> I think teaching is a very unique career. I don't know if you can lump teachers in with other professionals as we regard professionals. The norms are so different. The whole idea of being a servant doesn't fit, gel, nicely with a professional aura. But, in fact, what am I doing here really is I'm serving, the community, the child, whatever. And I get sometimes quite amazed when people use 'I'm a professional' to actually avoid being the servant. (FG1/08/08/07)

For these teachers the force that drives and sustains them on a daily basis is the power and opportunity to develop people. There is excitement and reward in pursuing this mission:

> What actually gets me going is to put the same picture up year after year after year, the same picture, I put up on the screen and then I ask what do you think? And I'm still actually astounded at the variety of responses that I actually get. And I think that's the part that actually gets me back here. Not to fill in mark sheets, not to fill in reams and reams of pointless, brain numbing sheets of paper, but to actually see people grow intellectually and as people, and as little artists as well. (FG1/08/08/07)

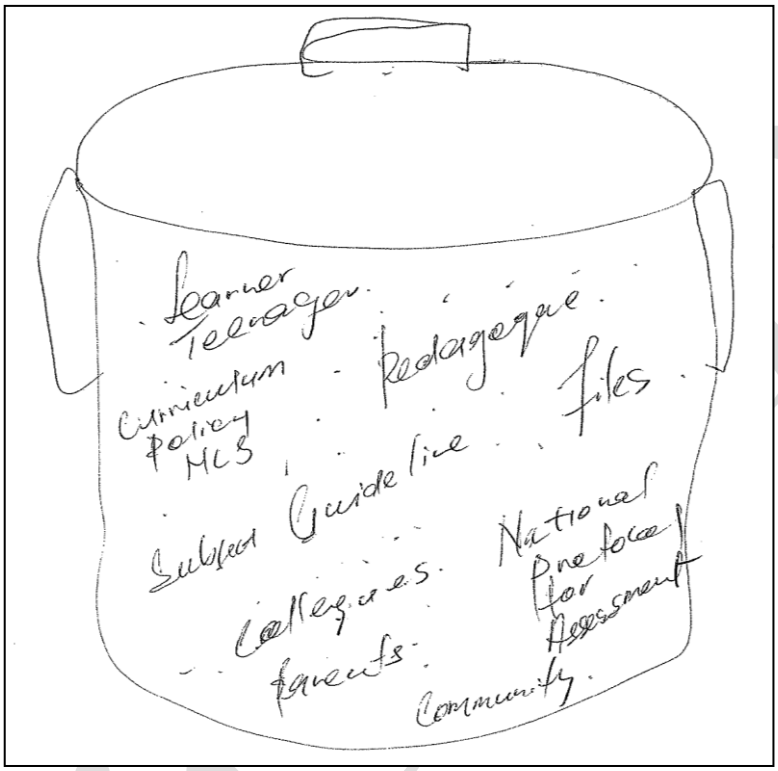
Commitment to their duty to serve and complete their mission is what preserves these teachers' identity intact and enables them to return to their classrooms with consistent purpose despite the threats to their identity.

Drawing 12, the final drawing, sums up the above complexity in the teachers' perceived identity. The teacher sees himself as a big pot in which are placed all the elements of the education process: the role players (learner teenager, pedagogue, colleagues, parents, community), the curriculum (Curriculum policy, NCS, Subject [assessment] guideline[s]) and the procedures as well as the administrative controls (National Protocol for Assessment [Recording and Reporting]) and organisational arrangements (files). These ingredients, subjected to the cooking process, eventually must yield a product in the form of learners who achieve learning outcomes. Of note is the fact that the teacher does not show a pot boiling over and steaming because of the build up of pressure. The implication is that the process of cooking takes place somehow given all the right ingredients. However, the better the

WitsETD

ingredients the better the product will be. Also worth noting is that the teacher does not see himself as the most important ingredient; all are important and necessary if the best outcome is to be achieved. The identity of this teacher is held together by the effective working together of all the elements that contribute to the process.

Drawing 12 - "The Stewing pot" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07)



This section has shown that teachers in "achieving schools" feel demoralised and disillusioned because they feel their professionalism is under attack. A major cause of this is that they suspect that much of the current regulatory controls do not enable them to deliver quality education. The next section investigates the teachers' view of autonomy. My aim is to understand what teachers in "achieving schools" understand by the concept of professional autonomy and the ways their conception of autonomy is in conflict with their experience of regulation.

4.2 PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY - THE DELICATE BALANCE

Autonomy is generally regarded as an essential requirement for a profession. Commonly this implies freedom of action and the ability to operate in terms of one's own values and principles; to act independently of external control (Morrow, 1989; Hoyle and John, 1995; Sachs, 2001). Teachers' description of what they believe is or should be the ideal understanding of autonomy guides us in our understanding of what, for teachers, may be

regarded as professional conduct. In other words, I investigate to what extent teachers feel they need freedom and to what degree they believe this must be limited to enable them to deliver quality education. In the pursuit of quality, when is the level of autonomy too much and when is control too little and vice versa?

The beliefs of the teachers in this study about autonomy show that rather than defining exactly what "autonomy" is, they interpret this concept by describing what they believe should be its limitations. They describe what they regard as too much autonomy and what is too little. It is the rationale for restricting autonomy that justifies the limitations. It is important to note that when the teachers find the reasons for controlling and limiting their autonomy are justified and when they feel that the rules that govern their teaching make sense to them, they believe they have autonomy. They believe in the need for limitations and they explain the rationale for these limitations. I focus on the delicate balance between freedom and control that constitutes the teachers' views of professional autonomy and the implications this has for the construct "professional conduct" (that is the delivery of quality education).

The teachers repeatedly articulated a desire for autonomy in their classrooms and for the most part they do experience it within that domain: "You're in charge of your kingdom" (FG2/15/08/07) and "Oh yes, within my subject definitely. I have complete autonomy there [the classroom]. Nobody knows what I'm doing" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07).

In this excerpt the teacher revels in her autonomy behind the classroom doors. She does not acknowledge or experience constraints from outside:

> When I go to my class I'm myself, I'll do what I feel will help me get to learners' minds, to make learners understand. I don't feel any pressure from anywhere, from outside – no pressure at all. I'm just happy to be in my class, doing my job, teaching. It makes me happy. (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07)

Some teachers believe that they know what they are supposed to do, that they can do it in a professional and accountable manner, exercising full autonomy. They find this professionally satisfying. The teacher in the excerpt seems to belong to this group of teachers.

While this experience of autonomy in the classroom is what the teachers want, they note the tension around whether they should have autonomy. The excerpt below shows that the teacher understands that "autonomy" is a contested notion. The teacher shows this in her debate with the chairperson of the SGB:

WitsETD

> Now that [the belief that teachers should have autonomy] is what teachers always believe. Now I know that I've had this argument with our chairman of our governing body. Because he has said the teachers need to go away from that idea, and now it is rather a case of that it's parents, learners, teachers who need to work together to achieve specific outcomes and things. And I've had endless fights with him about it. (FG2/15/08/07)

The teacher also indicates that she believes there may be a need for limiting autonomy: "And he always tries to persuade me that he's right. And to a large extent he's probably got it right and [laughs] is right. But yes, I do think the teachers want to have a certain amount of autonomy, specifically in their classes [classrooms]" (FG2/15/08/07). The teacher articulates here the discrepancy between what teachers want and what their sense tells them is right. In the analysis of the teachers' beliefs that follows I will discuss the different aspects that are negotiated for this relationship to achieve an appropriate balance between freedom and control: between what teachers want, what society perceives it ought to be and what is right.

4.2.1 Too much freedom, not enough control

The teachers point out that too much freedom/independence results in lack of coherence in the system and the school, indiscipline and chaos in classrooms and incomplete or incorrect curriculum delivery. It creates uncertainty about the curriculum requirements and reduces professional expertise. The main idea here is that autonomy needs to be restricted.

4.2.1.1 Control is needed to establish order and coherence

In the following quotation the teacher argues that a framework is necessary to provide coherence, that there is always a possibility that teacher authority can become autocratic ("we are human beings" (FG3/22/08/07)). It makes sense to this teacher to have restrictions because the alternative is disintegration and lawlessness. Total autonomy would not contribute to delivery of quality education:

> I don't think total autonomy should be given to teachers, because sometimes we are human beings. You are angry in the classroom, this learner has done this. Sometimes yes, you get frustrated to the point of punishing them ... when it's not due. So once we do that we are running a risk of our institutions being autocratic and every teacher will run independently. There won't be any coherency in this school. Because I believe, this is my classroom; I do what I want in my classroom. Like I'll be saying, this is my house. No-one will come and tell me what to do in my house. Then even the principal will lose control of the school. (FG3/22/08/07)

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By implication one could say that to the degree that external structures and requirements are conducive for creating a coherent operation for teachers in their classrooms, autonomy is regarded as a rational construct.

Some teachers acknowledge that autonomy may need to be limited to fix up the results of a state of laissez-faire order (shortly after 1994) which left a dysfunctional education system in its wake. In an attempt to correct the state of laissez-faire, with time the government has created more restrictions on teachers' professional judgment. In the following quotation the teacher expresses a dimension of the relation between what teachers want and what is right:

> Just shortly after 1994 ... there was a lot of freedom in terms of how you could go about, but it seems as the years passed by that became more … they structured things more and we're more restricted in terms of using our professional judgement, so that's how I would say. Gradually we seem to be more restricted in using our professional judgements. I don't know if I'm right in my perceptions, it's just the feeling I get. (FG4/06/09/07)

What kind of restrictions? For one, teachers have to use all the teaching time properly, they cannot waste it by arriving late, and the lesson and learners need to be managed carefully all the time (see below). This suggests a relational view of autonomy which is often stated in contrast to the view of the "irresponsible" teacher. For example:

> And my opinion is a lot of educators are not prepared. They arrive at class and after twenty minutes they've got nothing to do for the kids, then the kids sit around causing chaos. (FG2/15/08/07)

Embedded in this claim is the view that there cannot be a laissez-faire attitude or learning time will just slip away unproductively. This is consistent with: "But if a teacher says, 'I don't care anyway', the whole classroom will be chaotic and that will indicate that the teacher doesn't care" (FG3/22/08/07). In lieu of the possibility that "the ... classroom will be chaotic" the teachers expressed the view that restrictions are justified and should regulate personal freedoms. I refer to this view of autonomy as "relational autonomy", noting the relation between educationally justified restrictions and freedom.

4.2.1.2 With freedom comes responsibility

Articulated in a positive way, autonomy is associated with order and a plan. In this view autonomy implies discipline and responsibility:

> [I] know exactly what I'm going to do that period. I think that's very important. If you're going to suddenly start thinking, mmm ... what am I going to do today,

WitsETD

> you're definitely going to have problems. You must know exactly what you are going to do and you must be prepared. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

The view of the professional teacher that emerges here is of a teacher who has a high level of internal accountability which directs her/him in the exercise of autonomy. This requires that teachers: "Always have to choose the right option rather than the easier option" (FG1/08/08/07). On this view the teacher drives herself to complete her tasks in terms of her own internally defined standards of quality, for example, "When I've marked an assignment, I give it back to them as soon as possible. That's just…work ethic to me it goes with being professional. And if I've lapsed one day, tomorrow I must catch up" (FG4/06/09/07).

The teachers understand that with the freedom (autonomy) comes responsibility, or the ability to give account for what they do:

> Being able to make decisions independently, that you can come to a decision and go that direction ... then I'll bring it in there, but not just haphazard off the cuff. (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07)

> For me it's truly being response-able, being able to take on the responsibility, the ability to respond in your particular field and to use initiative to relate and to solve problems which are not necessarily solved for you … pre-solved. (FG1/08/08/07)

In short, the above responses emphasise that the teachers believe that if there were no boundaries or control there would be no educational order. Discipline and standards of performance and thus preparation according to a curriculum plan is an acceptable limitation.

4.2.1.3 Control is needed to establish a common curriculum

If sole discretion were left with teachers regarding curriculum content and skills, the teachers believe, learners might not receive a balanced quality education. The following teacher feels that a quality teacher uses her freedom responsibly by using her ideas in relation to what her learners need, given the society they live in, more specifically, given what they need in order to continue education:

> But the problem is that our responsibility is so two-folded, to deliver quality education but it's also to give our learners the best possible start for the rest of their lives. So if I'm doing wonderfully esoteric things in my classroom but I'm not preparing them for the exam, they may go out into the world with wonderful understanding but they're never going to get a chance to prove it at tertiary education because they're not going to get in. (FG1/08/08/07)

WitsETD

Their experience with C2005 leads the teachers to believe that curriculum content limitations are necessary. Without this there was so much variation and some teachers "did nothing". In their opinion the autonomy given in the C2005 design led to failure to deliver quality education:

> I think to an extent they tried professional autonomy. In a way it was also very restrictive but it was also autonomy where they introduced OBE and they basically took prescription as far as content was concerned out of the equation, and you could decide about the content yourself. And that was a failure, a complete failure. Because some people just did nothing. Other people didn't have a clue what to do. And children arrived at school and they all learned different things, I mean, it just couldn't work. So I don't think you can have complete autonomy, not as far as content is concerned. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

The teachers want a clear framework and boundaries in which to exercise their professional autonomy. Too much freedom and lack of clarity regarding curriculum expectations is not regarded as autonomy but lack of support from educational authorities. Left without the support (when OBE started) the teacher in the above excerpt feels that no prescriptions, particularly of content lead to "complete failure". Again, the construct of professional autonomy makes sense only if it is understood in relation to a coherent normative framework, clear curriculum content which is articulated to future demands that learners would need to meet later on in their lives. The parameters for this relation are tenuous. What is clearer is the danger when restrictions and prescriptions are removed. This is particularly so for those who are not experts: "But unfortunately, especially in our society … I don't think people have enough expertise to have complete autonomy" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

The grade 12 final external examinations seem to function as the clearest mark for standards. For these teachers the problem, however, is that the curriculum that should support the path towards this examination is not experienced as clear enough. Without such clarity, a teacher says, she might miss the mark in the moderation exercise and feel that she has failed:

> Yes, people are concerned about that [what should be in the grade 10 and 11 portfolios] because they're worried that … you know, we have become worried about moderation and things like that because you feel that if you go to a moderation and you haven't met the requirements that somehow you have failed as a professional, shall we say. Maybe you haven't failed the children but you have failed. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

> So you would in fact be thinking of the best interests of the learners. But if it's passing that exam and making sure that they're ok to do that, that's one thing. But then I think that the parameters have to be shifted, if you see long term that it's

WitsETD

> going to benefit them to do it in another way well then you have to work a medium path. I think because it's not as prescribed, so they're saying well then take what you've got and do as long as you meet the outcomes. But then we're not sure what the outcomes are until we have [examination] papers. So we're working in the dark. (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07)

To sum up, the teachers' beliefs indicate an acceptance and desire for limits on autonomy in order to ensure that quality education takes place and that there is coherence across the system and in all schools. Too much freedom, they feel, creates uncertainty, with respect to, for example, the curriculum. In this view "autonomy" is a relational construct and depends on certain conditions.

The next section will show how the delicate balance between control and freedom is upset when strategies to limit teacher autonomy are felt inappropriate or, in the opinion of teachers, are not justified educationally. Those kinds of restrictions, the teachers argue, constrain their ability to deliver quality.

4.2.2 Too much control, not enough freedom

The main threat to teacher autonomy identified by teachers is the increasing trend towards prescription of everything: "What I feel the department is doing is quite often they're trying to be too prescriptive as to what has to be done, when, where and how" (FG2/15/08/07). External restrictions, as established in chapter 4.2.1 above as being necessary, in the opinion of teachers, are reaching a point of becoming "too prescriptive".

4.2.2.1 Doing things against one's professional judgment

Resentment about the absence of consultation and the imposition in a prescriptive way of constantly changing new demands is evident in the excerpt below:

> ... but they change it all the time. I mean, within the spell of this year only, they've changed the assessment standards, three times. I got a fax last week saying, all right this is how you do the new assessment standards and it was completely different from what I had actually done. And that's where our professional judgements are now ... what you are told, that's it. (FG4/06/09/07)

In this quotation the teacher criticises the frequency of change. Not only is he told what to do and how to do it without any consultation but the substance of what he has to do is subject to constant change at short notice.

Even if the teacher realises that the constantly changing curriculum, about which he was not consulted, is too long and his learners cannot keep up, he has to implement it because that is

WitsETD

what he has been told to do; it is the prescribed (compulsory) curriculum which he implements despite his professional judgment cautioning him to do something else: "because once you start rushing them you are trying to chase the syllabus, then you lose them (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07)". Teachers have to use a set scheme of work: "So they're curbing it. ... now they've actually given us one and said you've got to work according to that (FG2/15/08/07)".

The teachers frequently find themselves doing things in their classroom that go against their professional judgment, for example, group work. In the following excerpt the teacher criticises the expectation in the IQMS instrument (as she interprets it) that teachers use group work. She finds this kind of regulation prescriptive, and believes that it disregards teacher's professional judgment about what would best serve her particular educational purpose. More so, she believes the idea is not appropriate for the context:

> If I just think of one of the criteria for example, it seems that the IQMS wants to promote group work, for example: that that's one of the criteria, blah, blah, blah. But group work doesn't work for every teacher or for every class. So in that sense, I think [autonomy] is actually taken away, well we will do co-operative work. So in a way I can see that it can actually, to an extent, just kind of limit you. (FG4/06/09/07)

One of the areas the teachers singled out as particularly prescriptive is assessment. The teachers claim that they are told very specifically how they have to assess and they follow that despite their view that the form of assessment does not fit with the type of knowledge they teach. For example, an Art teacher reflects:

> It's become very prescriptive. And I found that very, very restrictive in the arts. That there must be a cut and dried way in which you actually assess a painting or practical work. (FG1/08/08/07)

When the teachers try to think through the shift towards a restrictive system, they express the following irony: the system has changed drastically in that everything of the past was called into question. In trying to fix it up, the teacher quoted below argues that the government went about it the wrong way:

> You see I think the department misses the point. They feel these things wrong … And they want to change everything. They want to fix it up, this is a new government … but I think they go about it the wrong way … they believe they must change everything now. Whether it worked or not, just change it. Change is good, I believe in change, it makes you grow, develop, but if something is really working rather just try to improve on that than changing the whole system. (FG4/06/09/07)

WitsED

The irony the teacher feels is that teachers were robbed of what worked, which is also what they knew how to do well. Here the problem becomes one of logic: why change something that works and instead impose practices (when to do essays and how to organise learners) that do not work "for every teacher in every class" (FG4/06/09/07).

In the excerpt below the teacher tries to make sense of changes or limitations being imposed on him. He cannot see the logic of what is being demanded because he believes it does not contribute towards quality education. He is trapped in a futile bind: he cannot refuse to do what is required and what is required is very time-consuming and, in his opinion, not educationally of much value. The education department is restricting autonomy inappropriately. They are being "rigid in the wrong places":

> I think that we are constrained a lot by what we're expected to do. There's a lot of things we can't say well I'm actually not going to do that. So you have to do it, and it's very time consuming. So, it takes away from being able to use your professional judgement all the time and saying, this is a waste of time so I'm rather going to do that. ... I think often they are rigid in the wrong places though. They haven't given us a broad enough sort of sense of what the curriculum should be, so everybody's doing different things. So there they haven't actually said, do this, this, and this, whereby you can structure your syllabus, whatever, around what you wanted to do. But they have been rigid in things like rubrics and things which are actually a bit arbitrary. I've always maintained that trying to mark a painting through a detailed rubric is rather like trying to eat an apple through a tennis racket. (FG1/08/08/07)

The resentment expressed by this teacher is not against the idea of restrictions. The teacher understands the government's motivation in creating a common standard: "I think in an attempt to bring up the bottom, they've squashed the top's creativity that was part of your professionalism" (FG1/08/08/07). The teacher is resentful of the fact that the restrictions are not applied in a differentiated way to suit the relevant teacher and appropriate practice. Teachers comply in order not to rock the boat rather than because it makes sense. The relation of autonomy created is "channelling" and amounts to "Yes, baas; all right, baas":

> They [education department officials] feel the majority (of) teachers is not doing what they should and that's why they want these structures with lesson plans, work schedules, and that's why they enforce. I want to freak out. So they're channelling us all, and this is the way. They are so unsure about the work ethic of the rest of them. Jansen,[122] said, they keep on going back to the Model C schools, that the white teachers took OBE and went on with it. There's nothing going on anywhere else. So you see what I'm saying. Again we said, 'Yes, baas; all right, baas; let's go

[122] Professor Jonathan Jansen, then Dean of Education, University of Pretoria, speaking at a workshop for teachers.

WitsETD

> on … here's my lesson plan; I've done it.' You know what I'm saying! (FG4/06/09/07)

To the above teacher's compliance ("Yes, baas") the teacher in the following quotation expresses his disappointment at losing "all those wonderful ideas" in the "midst of bureaucracy":

> The departmental methodology has not kept up with the ideology. Because I got so excited about all these new things that I could teach, but then they started prescribing what I had to do and when I had to do it by. So actually I had no freedom anymore and all those wonderful ideas which I thoroughly support are actually being lost in the midst of bureaucracy again. And this is what happened the first time. (FG1/08/08/07)

The curriculum promised flexibility and opportunity for creative, relevant teaching and learning experiences but in practice the new curriculum was enforced in prescriptive ways; the novelty and educational significance of teachers' ideas were lost and with those the teachers' sense that they know what is right for their learners. And so, according to these teachers the irony is that the government created too much freedom when OBE started, opposed everything of the past even if it worked and then faced with teachers' outcry and poor learner performance, the government then decided to standardise all teachers, prescribing rules and practices (e.g. rubrics) that feel inappropriate to what they know and what they desired in the change.

The following excerpt shows how the teachers struggle with the right balance between freedom and control. They handled greater freedom in the past very well but with increasing prescription they have become less able to act autonomously when given the space. The teacher in the quotation below acknowledges how foolish this is. For example, when portfolios for Grade 12s and grade 9s were introduced the content was prescribed for standardisation and moderation purposes but when introduced for other grades this was not so. The teachers of those grades feel incompetent and unable to decide for themselves what to put in the portfolios. The point is then that teachers become dependent on the restrictions to direct them; they lose their confidence in their independent professional judgment. They surrender their freedom unnecessarily which the teacher believes is "stupid":

> Yes, now we are stressing about it … Yes, we basically knew we must cover the four skills which are now basically LOs, reading, writing, speaking … Yes, and because it's called a portfolio. You know when it first started I was a bit level-headed I must say [laughs] because I used to say to my department, 'Listen, nothing's changed. We've always done this amount of writing; we've always done so many comprehensions a term; we're just carrying on with that!' But now, people

WiSETD

> keep saying, 'What are we supposed to be doing? What are we supposed to be doing? This one is doing that and maybe we should be doing that.' And now we're all running around chasing our tails, and I'm actually glad we've spoken because we're being stupid. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

In summary, when prescriptions do not make sense, educationally, teachers follow them in compliance. Continuous compliance undermines their confidence in their professional knowledge and judgment to make the appropriate choices for the delivery of quality education. Teachers have been "channelled" and rendered compliant. From this we see that both too little and too much control has a detrimental effect on teachers' ability to deliver quality education. In the next section the teachers' beliefs about their ideal conception of autonomy are described.

4.2.3 An ideal conception of autonomy

From what the teachers believe and say about their experiences of autonomy a picture of the ideal balance between freedom and control emerges. The teachers accept that control is necessary for proper functioning and delivery of quality education. The limitations that they find acceptable are those that make sense in that they guide their teaching. These teachers want to operate within these kinds of restrictions because they can see the rationale for them. Their understanding of autonomy implies the existence of necessary curbs:

> For me personally I believe whether it's being professional or not, it's me being accountable for what I do. And doing it the best I can do it and meeting the needs of what I need to do. No, I might be silly for saying it, but there are rules and regulations in all jobs and that whatever it is…if you have that calling for that you will do it in the best way. So if I need to clock in and clock out well then I need to do that, but I should be there for the time that I need to be there ... (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07)

It is acknowledged in the above quotation that reducing autonomy and imposing rules and regulation happen for good reason and is a matter that applies to all jobs. The strength of the above view is that it conveys the importance of having a sense of internal criteria ("do it in the best way") but that criteria are nested within rules and regulation. In this ideal view there is no conflict between doing things out of "calling" (and thus following one's own criteria) and following rules and regulation ("I need to clock in and clock out").

In the ideal view of autonomy according to this teacher there need not be a conflict between "being accountable" and "autonomy":

> And that you can be held accountable, that you also have a right to autonomy. That you don't have to be watched … people watching over your shoulder, checking

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> you're doing everything right. But then at the same time it comes with the responsibility of getting everything done without having someone checking over your shoulder. (FG1/08/08/07)

A high level of internal accountability is evidenced and, in the opinion of the teachers in the above quotations, they should have sufficient freedom/autonomy to do their work effectively. Some limitation of freedom is acceptable provided the rationale for the limitation is sound.

In the course of my discussions with the teachers there was frequent reference to the need for differentiation between teachers who display professionalism or have the expertise to exercise professional judgment and those who do not. In the following excerpt a teacher compares the diligent, internally accountable way she does her work: "Ek ken my werk, ek doen my plig en klaar"[123] (FG2/15/08/07) with colleagues at other schools who she believes do not or cannot exercise the same degree of professional accountability. The teacher alludes to the need for external controls or limits on freedom because not all teachers do their work properly:

> Now at the moment I have on Tuesdays and Thursdays got children coming over from a school in X (a Pretoria township) where they have done no work this whole year. I've said to them we will work on this, we will work on this, I will get you through. Now that teacher cannot say the same thing, 'Ek ken my werk, ek doen my plig en klaar' (FG2/15/08/07. So it depends. So it's all very well us saying, 'Dis hoe ons voel,' maar daar is mense wat doen nie hulle werk nie".[124](FG2/15/08/07)

This is consistent with the following teacher who believes that the degree of autonomy teachers should enjoy is dependent on teachers' having high standards: "Yes, depends on the person's standards. That's what I'm saying. As long as you're a quality teacher as it goes with the definition" (FG1/08/08/07) and being internally accountable.

In the excerpt that follows the teacher shows an understanding of a professional relationship with a "client". She exercises professional autonomy in the best interest of that "client" and it is done without reference to a "boss" (the department) because a professional person's "boss" is herself:

> Accountable means … basically who's my client, I see it that way, not really who's my boss. Who's my client? I'm accountable to my client. Because that's our learners and our learners' parents have basically put their future in our hands. And so what I do affects those ... and education and mastering certain skills, is vital to your future. And so I think we're accountable to our pupils. But to the department I'm afraid I don't feel at all accountable to them at all; to society at large as well

[123] I know my work and do my duty and that's it.
[124] 'This is how we feel,' but there are people who don't do their work.

WitsETD

> because obviously what happens in my classroom is going to affect society and the people they come into contact with, their employers and whatever. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

The strongest form of accountability for this teacher is herself. She does, however, believe that in exercising her autonomy she is meeting the needs of the client and the broader society. The supervisory role and the right of the boss to be accounted to by the employed professional are given scant regard in the above excerpt and in the following quotation from another teacher: "I personally try my best to help learners do well. Most of the time I don't care what the department of education's fantasy is like. After all I'm the one involved in the actual teaching" (FG3/22/08/07).

In quality schools a moral contract appears to be in place that supports teacher autonomy provided teachers deliver their side of the deal and deliver quality education. New teachers learn quality by watching the ethos of care, responsibility and trust:

> When the school started, (the Principal) who started the school, he followed this philosophy of everybody is valuable, able and responsible ... And he started with the staff, and that meant that he trusted that we would be responsible and hard working and we were. It's actually funny how it works. ... when the new teachers come in, they already see that ethos that people are sitting, when they have a free period, they're sitting and they're working. They're not standing in the corridors chatting. And it started with (the Principal) his trust, people didn't want to let him down, but there was no interference because he trusted us. And (the new Principal) has continued with that. He has faith in our ability. And only once somebody's disappointed him badly will he start interfering, and I mean he needs to. I wouldn't call it interfering … intervening. Let's rather call it intervening. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

In sum, the teachers believe they understand their responsibility and take action to fulfil it. This entails being willing to keep learning and engaging in practices that help them reflect on the quality of what they do, evaluating what they teach and how, in relation to what their learners achieve:

> Maybe I gave an exercise to the learners and afterwards I think this just didn't do what I wanted it to do, didn't achieve what I wanted to achieve. ... But sometimes I might say things aren't going very well at the moment, why? So I will evaluate myself in that way. (Denny, Red River/12/09/07)

They do not blame the learners for the outcome of a lesson but rather exercise their internal sense of responsibility. They seek criteria of good practice: "What did I do wrong? What have I done differently?" (FG4/06/09/07). They use material prepared by others only if: "I trust their

WitsETD

capabilities and only if it meets the required standard. I will try it, but if it does not work or needs altering/improvement I will suggest it at the meeting for next year" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). They ask a respected colleague to evaluate them: "I also wanted to know [if] I am really a good teacher or not. So I would get someone who's an expert in the subject that they teach [to] come [and] see me and sit and then just look at how I teach and then afterwards ... I ask the person was it a good lesson" (FG3/22/08/07). They use their initiative to do things differently if it will mean delivering better quality education: "I prefer doing things my way. The Yellow A and C workbook leaves me no room for initiative" (FG2/15/08/07). In these examples autonomy entails being proactive in one's pursuit of the delivery of quality education, following internal criteria and seeking ways of doing things better.

In the next chapter I examine in greater detail the factors in the external environment that contribute meaningfully to the teachers' delivery of quality education. I compare these with the factors that the teachers believe to be meaningless and unnecessarily constraining on their professional autonomy.

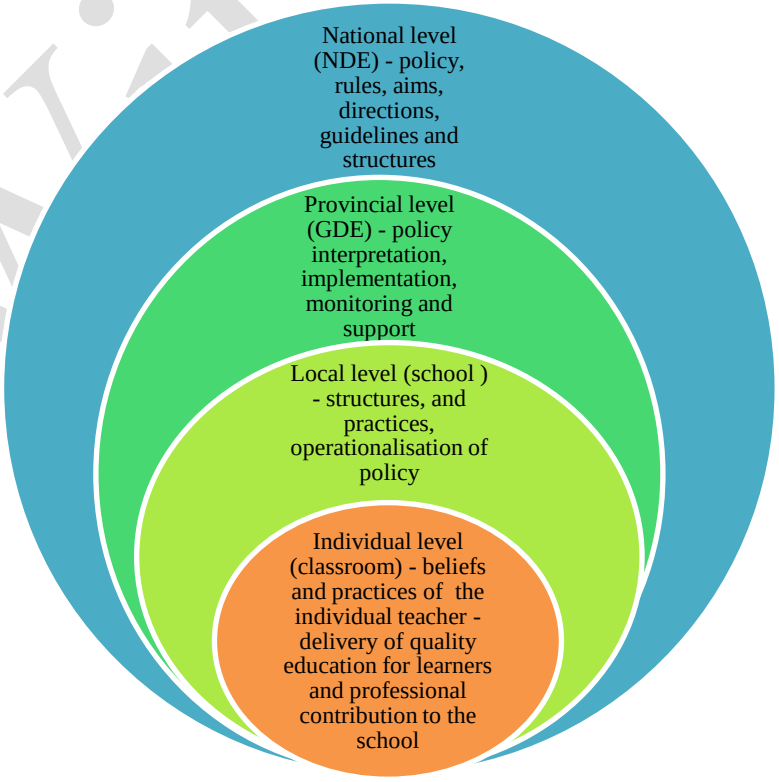
WitsETD

CHAPTER 5 TEACHERS' ABILITY TO DELIVER QUALITY EDUCATION

5.1 TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT WHAT IS MEANINGFUL AND MEANINGLESS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The investigation of teachers' drawings, the metaphors they use and their reported experiences show a fragile professional identity (see chapter 4.1, p. 103). This identity is 'protected' by factors operating at a personal level, such as, the teachers' belief in the educational importance of their work. However, the teachers are not isolated and independent from their external environment: the context where they do their work. They hold a relational view of professional autonomy (see chapter 4.2, p. 130) which welcomes limitations on their freedom provided the rationale for the limitation makes educational sense. In other words, when policies and regulations in the external environment are conducive to the teachers' exercise of professional autonomy and the delivery of quality education, teachers regard them as meaningful. When policies and regulations undermine the teachers' sense of professionalism and make no educational sense, they regard them as a threat. The factors operating in the external environment can either enable teachers or constrain them in the performance of their professional work.

Figure 2 - Levels in the educational environment



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In this section I investigate what in the external environment the teachers feel contributes meaningfully to their ability to deliver quality and what they find meaningless or even damaging. I shall first examine the factors that operate from far outside in the external environment, in particular the impact of the National Department of Education (NDE) and because the teachers in the study are practising in Gauteng, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). I shall then focus on factors operating at a level closer to where the teachers do their work, namely: the school (see Figure 1 above).

The NDE is responsible for the policy[125] that provides the framework in terms of which teachers do their work. The GDE, as the employer, is responsible for interpreting, mediating, implementing and monitoring policy through the actions of its employees. In terms of the contractual understanding teachers have of their work, the NDE and GDE are expected to fulfil their responsibilities, namely, provide and support the implementation of clear and reasonable policy so that the teachers are able to fulfil their part of the contract, namely: deliver quality education.

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[125] The discussion is restricted to a discussion of policy provision in the case of the NDE and the interpretation, implementing and monitoring of policy and support in the case of the GDE. I focus on Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability policies. The policy that lays down the philosophy underpinning the curriculum, its content and its underlying pedagogy and methodology is contained in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). It was introduced from Grade R level in phases as a revision of Curriculum 2005 (C 2005). The first cohort of learners who has been taught for their entire schooling on the new curriculum wrote the Grade 12 final exit examinations in 2008 based on this curriculum. The curriculum policy consists of two main documents, the curriculum for Grade R – 9, the General Education and Training Band (GET) and the curriculum for Grade 10 – 12 (General), the Further Education and Training Band (FET). This study confines itself to the GET Senior Phase curriculum, Grade 7 – 9 (particularly Grades 8 and 9) which consists of eight compulsory learning areas and the FET for Schools curriculum which for each learner comprises four compulsory subjects and three electives chosen from a prescribed list. The responses of teachers interviewed focus mostly on the FET curriculum issues. It is worth observing that this is indicative of the reality that in the secondary school curriculum activities are heavily shadowed by the Grade 12 exit examination. Even the curriculum activities in grades 8 and 9 are undertaken with an eye on what they contribute towards preparation for that final end point. For this reason, I suspect, there is limited comment on the GET curriculum content. The GET curriculum is sometimes treated disdainfully as superficial play that ill prepares learners for the FET level work. It is blamed for the inability of grade 10s to adapt to the FET subjects and the workload involved at this higher level.
While the NCS Subject Statement for each subject identifies the learning outcomes and assessment standards, the Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG) expand on the principles of outcomes-based assessment (OBA). The National Protocol on Recording and Reporting (NPRR) (G.N. 29467, 11 December, 2006), an addendum to the policy document. The National Senior Certificate: A Qualification at Level 4 on the National Qualifications framework (NQF)) standardises the recording and reporting processes within the framework of the NCS. It sets the minimum number of formal assessment tasks on which progression or promotion for each grade will be based. It stipulates the national codes and descriptors for achievement. This protocol also serves as an accountability tool. Knowledge and understanding of these two documents would be essential for the efficient and effective performance of teachers. (In the course of late 2007 and the first half of 2008 Examination Guidelines were issued by the DoE for certain subjects to clarify curriculum and assessment issues. These policy documents were not available at the time of interviewing the teachers.)
The accountability policies discussed are: IQMS Policy (ELRC Collective agreements 1 and 8 of 2003) and Whole School Evaluation Policy (GN 22512).

5.2 THE IMPACT OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK THAT CONTROLS TEACHERS

5.2.1 Factors conceived as meaningful

The teachers identify only three aspects in the policy environment that they experience as meaningful. They see the content requirements of the curriculum policy as meaningful. They identify with its modern thrust and praise it particularly when it is specific enough. The content of the curriculum is "a lot more modern stuff" (FG2/15/08/07); "I think it's one of the best in the world. I don't want to actually exclude anything" (FG4/06/09/07); "So you do need content. Fortunately with the new curriculum they actually prescribe content for science" (FG2/15/08/07); "If the verb says analyse this and this, I know what level to pitch my content ... this is the level at which I must have them give feedback and show that they understand" (FG2/15/08/07).

The Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs) are appreciated for the fact they provide the necessary direction in many subjects: "It leads and supports me to meet the required LOs" (FG4/06/09/07). The teachers believe that by specifying the minimum amount of formal assessment required, the National Protocol for Recording and Reporting (NPRR) helps them to focus their lessons: "We use it as a framework" (FG4/06/09/07); "I check what must I do? What do I want to achieve at the end of the day?" (FG3/22/08/07). The exemplar examinations help them design tasks and determine content focus: "Use it as an example" (FG2/15/08/07); "They do help in determining the type of tasks to be done as well as the cognitive level of the task" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07). Teachers experience the NDE as playing its part in the contractual relationship when it provides clarity and certainty for their work. Policies and departmental interventions that provide clarity and build their capacity to be internally accountable in order to meet the external accountability demands are experienced as meaningful for the delivery of quality education. In addition, the teachers feel that the process of introspection required by the IQMS strengthens their professional identity; it provides them with a model of a quality teacher: "what every good teacher does anyway" (FG4/06/09/07), a point of reference against which to measure themselves: "It can help you to focus on your strengths" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07) or a benchmark: "Are you doing it right?" (FG1/08/08/07).

In the next section I identify issues that arise from the external environment that teachers experience as meaningless.

WitsETD

5.2.2 The impact of meaningless factors

Policy idealism, curriculum under-specification, paperwork and administration load, and lack of educational authority are some of the factors that teachers find detracting from their capacity to produce quality. These factors are experienced by teachers in a form of insecurity and intensification, and together they contribute to what I call a breakdown of the contractual relationship. The sum of all of this is the undermining of the teachers' conception of professionalism and the breakdown of their professional identity without any improvement in the quality of education outcomes.

5.2.2.1 Policy idealism

The teachers blame OBE's pedagogical and methodological idealism: "Whoever is the creator of this new system of education should see what is actually happening in schools because what the creator idealistically had in mind ... Unfortunately ... only happens on paper. With regard to the practical part of it, is not possible" (FG3/22/08/07). For example, this teacher believes it would be possible if classes were smaller: "And without looking at the capacity of learners we had in the classroom ... I mean, it's meant for fifteen learners in the classroom, that OBE" (FG3/22/08/07); "If you read a lot of the circulars, a lot of the things that they come up with are not realistic. And it's like when last were you were in a classroom because this is not possible. But it's expected of you and you've got 35 or 37 or 40 people in your classroom and it's not realistic to do the things that they expect. To finish the matric syllabus by June! I mean honestly, it's not possible" (FG1/08/08/07)[126] "This peer assessment thing, it's a major problem for me ... It is chaos ... the noise levels" (FG2/15/08/07); and "[I] can't with 50 learners in a small space" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07).

The idealistic view of the learner as self-motivated and independent who takes responsibility for his or her own learning envisaged in the NCS is also questioned: "They [the NCS] define the child [the envisaged learner] but not [the] kind that is the norm" (FG3/22/08/07). For example, during group work learners "... sit and relax; they copy whatever the assignments that you give them. They'll go out and ask someone to help them or give them the answers and come and submit and get a mark … but when it comes to assignments, projects, you know, or things that they do at home, this learner is getting everything right. When it comes to tests, the learner is failing" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07). The teachers consider the policy

[126] The two provisions of the circular (GDE Circular 38 of 2007) alluded to in this teacher's comment refer to the expectation that the teacher should write a developmental comment in every learner's book every day and complete the grade 12 curriculum by June. The first demand might be desirable but the second one is not even educationally sound.

WISER

unreasonable as it is not workable in their contexts. This teacher believes that the idea that: "The learners must take ownership of their learning process [and] have to be part of the decision making" (FG3/22/08/07) takes much more time than there is available. The irony is that OBE created the possibility for low expectations: "learners now are going to work towards getting this 30% minimum" (FG3/22/08/07); "Learners are coming from primary schools and moving onto Grade 8, Grade 9, they can't do a lot of things. Why? Because of OBE. They have been passing, you know, from grade to grade – passing, no problem" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07).

5.2.2.2 Insecurity

The primary cause of teachers feeling insecure is lack of clarity and frequency of policy changes, sometimes at the last minute:[127] "If the Department can be very clear and just bring us clear, you know, curriculum – work on this kind of a curriculum and don't change, then that might be better" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07). Teachers noted curriculum content under-specification as a prime example of lack of clarity: "They haven't given us a broad enough sort of sense of what the curriculum should be, so everybody's doing different things" (FG1/08/08/07) and "You can have the scope to explore whatever in as much or as little detail as possible. But then you're writing a common paper and so then how do you determine what it is?" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07). Teachers have even shared their insecurity with their learners: "But I've been very open with them and said, I'm as lost as you are" (FG2/15/08/07).

In addition to curriculum under-specification, the teachers noted their uncertainty about IQMS descriptors: "A lot of them are very … they're so vague that on a 4 point scale the difference between 3 and 4 is sometimes so vague that it's really difficult" (FG2/15/08/07); assessment terminology: "No sadly – don't know (at least I am being honest!)" (FG2/15/08/07), "The other thing is the language used. I mean, look at the terms of achievement and all that. Jargon is difficult" (FG3/22/08/07), and assessment requirements: "The [new assessment practices] disempowered us, and teachers are saying, 'I don't know what I'm doing anymore, I don't know what they want me to do, I don't know what they expect of me, I'm leaving, I can't take it!' And people just feel so insecure" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

Inadequate training has left teachers ill-prepared to implement policies: "So the teachers have to learn them [new curriculum concepts] first and then you have to teach them" (FG1/08/08/07) and consequently they feel insecure and unable to contribute to quality improvement. Poor

[127] Teachers were notified of changes to the curriculum to be examined in the 2007 November public national grade 11 examinations only in August of 2007.

WISER

quality training demoralises and leaves teachers in the dark: “and it puts you off teacher development because you associate teacher development with somebody standing there and mumbling about something ... it’s just a total mess” (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

5.2.2.3 De-skilling

The introduction of C 2005 followed by the NCS with its new terminology and approach left teachers feeling de-skilled. What they knew was de-valued in favour of a confusing set of new design principles and activities expressed in new terms that undermined teachers’ confidence in their existing knowledge and skills. A teacher comments on this: “I think it unnerved me, I think it stressed me (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07). Experienced teachers feel de-skilled: “I think this is one of the most frustrating things for teachers, they do feel de-skilled. They feel disempowered ... after teaching for years and years and years, and knowing exactly what you want to achieve” (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

5.2.2.4 Intensification

The teachers experience work intensification because of accountability demands and the evidence needed to prove they are doing their job. There is too much to do in too little time: “There’s literally no time to breathe” (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

The curriculum is deemed too long: “We need a smaller content to be able to practise all these things” (FG3/22/08/07); “We’re in grade 11 and our syllabus is so loaded we’re never going to finish” (FG1/08/08/07). Teachers cannot cope: “When they started with the portfolios, at the meetings some people said, ‘When are we going to have time to do all this work and all this marking?’” (Denny, Red River/12/09/07), nor can the learners: “The learners are saying, ‘We can’t keep up.’ The content is just too much in all the subjects. They can’t cope with the work load” (FG4/06/09/07); “I don’t know if I would be able to cope with all the work if I was a student” (FG4/06/09/07).

When the curriculum is so long that it cannot be done properly or there is no time left for matters that are pertinent to the needs of the learners in the teachers’ classrooms, the teacher is prevented from offering quality education: “And I would prefer to teach what I want to teach … within boundaries obviously, but not rush through the syllabus ... and know that we’re not going to finish it” (FG1/08/08/07).

The policies require more administration and paper work. Recording and reporting takes too much time: “What kills me is the paper work. And I suppose that is part of the system. All the

WiSETD

admin, it's ridiculous. And I don't think they ever look at it. I can't see who would look at all that paper work. I think they just feel if they can show huge archives of papers, then people will say well done my boy, you're doing very well at transforming education" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07); " I remember it [WSE] being stressful; I remember it being difficult, lots of admin" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07); "We're so busy filling in this document [IQMS] we don't get to really speak about the things we should be speaking about" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07); "The instrument is a waste of time ... too tedious ... [she longs for the simplicity of the past] one piece of paper ... What kills off IQMS at the moment is the instrument itself" (FG2/15/08/07); "doing it 100% would take forever – I hate forms and recording – prefer the old ways" (FG2/15/08/07).

A consistent theme of all the teachers' responses was that a lack of time prevented them from doing what they knew was important. Teaching time is reduced while the teachers gather evidence that they have done their work: "... remember they want evidence of everything, teaching happens in the time left" (FG4/06/09/07). "Some of the admin demands are being ignored in my department because after trying to comply we discovered that they left less time for teaching, and [less] energy" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

How do teachers respond to these policy obstacles? Some disregard the policy, for example, asked whether they adhere to the NPRR teachers gave various replies: "Not always" (FG2/15/08/07); "No" (FG2/15/08/07); "Yes and no" (FG3/22/08/07). Teachers have to weigh up their options to "go against the bureaucracy, I think you can use your professional judgement, but I think that we are constrained a lot by what we're expected to do. There's a lot of things we can't say well I'm actually not going to do that. So you have to do it, and it's very time consuming" (FG1/08/08/07). In other circumstances teachers just do what the education department wants because it is strategic to comply with instructions to the best of their ability in order not to prejudice their learners: "We're concentrating more on what does the department want us to achieve" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07); "I did it because they want it in my file" (FG4/06/09/07). Another teacher describes how strategic compliance entails her working cleverly, taking short cuts and in some cases providing pretence of compliance: "You've got to learn those shortcuts before you can do them" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07).

Out of frustration and under pressure, in some cases teachers resort to malicious compliance, for example, producing lessons plans after the lesson because the planning of the lessons is not the difficulty but the completion of the paperwork to prove the planning is: "The process is much easier because I know what was done. I know how long it took then; it's very easy"

WisETD

(FG2/15/08/07). Some teachers comply out of fear: "It's just that now somebody is going to look at that work. I think that's what people are worried about ... I'm just going to say, oh sorry, I'll put it in. And that I'm not going to get upset about it. Because to me that's not what teaching is about" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07) and they fear the consequences (often unknown); "You need it in your file, because they say so and you don't have it in your file, there's problems" (FG4/06/09/07).

Teachers experience this as lack of trust in their professional judgment and a capping of intelligent creative teaching and learning practice which hinders their ability to deliver quality: "But they have been rigid in things like rubrics and things which are actually a bit arbitrary. I've always maintained that trying to mark a painting through a detailed rubric is rather like trying to eat an apple through a tennis racket" (FG1/08/08/07).

5.2.2.5 Breakdown in the contractual relationship

The discussion in chapter 4.1.3, p. 120, showed that teachers believe that there should be a contractual relationship between themselves and the other role players in the education external environment: the NDE, GDE, community, parents, learners and the school. The extent to which each party fulfils its responsibilities in terms of the "contract" has an impact on teachers' ability to deliver quality. The teachers describe four situations in which they experience a breakdown in the relationship.

Firstly, it occurs when the policy is too idealistic and unreasonable. For example, a policy such as the IQMS is unreasonable because it depends on the parties to the evaluation having educational authority but this is not present. The Development Support Groups (DSGs)[128] of teachers do not always have evaluators who are experts: "He's a maths person [laughs]. Now we know maths people and language teachers are a different species" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07); "So we need someone who ... specialises in that field to say, this is how we approach this aspect" (FG3/22/08/07), in order to avoid inflated and unrealistic scores the "buddy, buddy type result" (FG2/15/08/07) that are influenced by window-dressing for the occasion: "It will be much better than the way you've been doing it" (FG3/22/08/07); "It's more objective" (FG2/15/08/07).

Together, the complexity of the instrument and the process, including all the paperwork, the absence of an objective standard or moderator, and the teachers' mistrust of the intention of the

[128] In terms of the ELRC IQMS Resolution this is the group of teachers at the school, including the teacher's supervisor, with the responsibility for evaluating the teacher and assisting him/her develop a Personal Growth Plan (PGP) and supporting the teacher in his/her development.

WitsETD

policy in so far as those who mediate it do not pay attention to the contextual differences in which teachers work, explain the teachers' experiences of a breakdown and their resentment.

Secondly, teachers experience a breakdown when the GDE fails to provide the support they need. This takes place through inefficiency: "I find them grossly inefficient" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07) and lack of expertise and failure to be accountable, which leads to disrespect for their educational authority: "I still don't know why we went to [training] because at the end of the day we could have taught the lady more than what she taught us" (FG2/15/08/07). The lack of educational authority of the WSE supervisors undermines the good intentions of the policy: "being criticised about that [lack of lesson plan in the format the supervisor wanted] and brought right down" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07); "So I'm not going to listen to what someone says to me, about the lessons that I teach when actually they haven't got a clue" (FG1/08/08/07); "If somebody's going to give me advice it needs to be somebody with more knowledge than I have ... they need to be people that are actually experts in each subject field. The English expert who gave the report-back ... there were about seven or eight grammatical and spelling errors. Then it just becomes ludicrous" (FG1/08/08/07).

No support is forthcoming after the teachers identify developmental needs in the IQMS: "Even if we sent the forms to the department, the department is doing nothing. They keep asking what your weak area is. So the paper work is going but the support is not coming" (FG3/22/08/07).

The teachers want support from GDE subject facilitators who have educational authority: "... to have more knowledge, know what's going on. That's one that's severely lacking in our area. I'm rowing my own boat" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07) and not just guidance about files, schedules, lesson plans and generic principles of the NCS: "... experts in their disciplines, subjects so that they can help" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). The teachers do not experience this currently: "What I found very frustrating is that your subject advisors are more clueless than you are most of the time. When they ask us to set the exam because they can't do it themselves, that is a bit worrying" (FG2/15/08/07).

Thirdly the GDE's failure to provide a report after the WSE visit outrages teachers because it demonstrates the GDE's lack of accountability: "And you WON'T believe it, we haven't had a report on that yet! Haven't had a comeback on that yet! Not at all! Not at all!" (FG4/06/09/07). WSE is experienced as: "A pain" (FG1/08/08/07) from which nothing is gained. Not one teacher interviewed could identify any benefits of the process for developing quality in a

WitsETD

school, except perhaps this cynical observation: “Keep my filing more up to date” (FG1/08/08/07).

The last breach of the contractual relationship is experienced in the form of a breakdown of trust. Despite the GDE’s failure to support and be accountable itself, it demands accountability from teachers (largely in the form of a paper trail of evidence). This teacher’s comment reflects his belief that the IQMS stems from a mistrustful government: “I’ve been doing what is [good] but the government doesn’t think that we are doing that” (FG3/22/08/07). Even when teachers treat the IQMS process seriously the result is questioned, showing lack of trust: “So they would call me and say, under no circumstances did you all get 4. It’s impossible” (FG4/06/09/07). WSE is another accountability policy that teachers believe stems from lack of trust: “I think the purpose was to find fault with the school” (FG1/08/08/07), “And [because you didn’t know what] the negative consequences would have been, you got obsessed with paper work for a while, but then it passed” (FG4/06/09/07). The fear, suspicion and stress that the process creates negates WSE’s potential for identifying areas for improvement and development.

5.2.3 Conclusion

The teachers recognise the importance of clear and reasonable curriculum policy as the framework for their work but believe that OBE assessment only policy provides them with a technical understanding of what is required. In fact, the teachers blame OBA for what they perceive to be a growing number of ill-prepared learners. Teachers do not believe they should account *to* the employer/GDE *for* their performance as measured in the bureaucratic manner of the IQMS instrument. They are not accountable *for* completing forms, having files and so on which do not contribute meaningfully to enhancing quality. Neither do they believe they should account *to* the WSE supervisors who in their eyes are not credible because of their lack of expertise *for* their performance once again measured only in a bureaucratic sense. The teachers in the “achieving schools” experience this kind of accountability (playing with compliance) as meaningless and constraining. Teachers perceive the GDE as hostile, critical and fault-finding rather than helpful: “When they come on a witch hunt to see what I am not doing” (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). Teachers feel chased/pushed, confused, overburdened, and insecure particularly when they have to teach without proper guidance and in too little time: “And at the moment I feel as if I’m being driven ... driven ... without a map. There’s no map. I don’t know where I’m being driven to, but I’m going very fast” (FG1/08/08/07). They feel frightened: “When they come [we are] all scared, window-dressing, fill in files because they are coming to check” (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). On balance, the teachers experience teacher regulation

WitsETD

far more through its demands and much less through its support. The experience of this breakdown is that the teachers do not feel helped to develop internal capacity to meet the external accountability demands: they are not enabled to improve the quality of their work. Instead their professional identity and professionalism are undermined by the fear, suspicion and insecurity that arise.

5.3 THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL FACTORS ON TEACHERS

Of all the factors in the external environment, the school has the most immediate effect on teachers' day-to-day ability to deliver quality and on their experience of professionalism. In this section I discuss the ways teachers perceive how contextual factors enable or constrain them in the delivery of quality education, alternatively whether they experience them as meaningful or meaningless. Not all these matters were pursued directly in the interviews; comments from the teachers were often in passing.

The effects of the apartheid legacy are seen in every school. There is a vast difference between the schools in the sample (see chapter 3.2.2.1, p. 78). Schools located in wealthier areas are better equipped to sustain themselves because of the human, social and economic capital of the community where they are situated. Principals in the poorer locations report more experiences of poverty and unemployment, lack of parental involvement, problems associated with HIV/Aids, drug and alcohol abuse and related social problems, criminal activity, and so on. Because of the apartheid government's unequal funding, schools which previously fell under the jurisdiction of the DET find themselves with a poor legacy of facilities and equipment. [129] In some cases, with enormous extra effort, the schools and the teachers in this study have made greater strides in overcoming the constraining factors.

I begin by examining the factors that operate in schools that the teachers experience as meaningful, those that enable them to deliver quality education. I then explore those factors that the teachers believe are constraining and consequently hinder them from delivering quality education.

5.3.1 The impact of meaningful factors

Teachers in this study experience having the necessary resources, motivated learners and a school climate and teaching culture that is conducive to quality teaching and learning as significant meaningful factors.

[129] "The ratio between the best-provided parts of the white system and the worst African 'homelands' was some 10 to 1 in total expenditure." (Crouch and Patel, 2006b: 2, citing Buckland and Fielden, 1994).

WiSETD

5.3.1.1 Educational resources

There are three aspects of the resourcing of schools that the teachers experience as meaningful to their delivery of quality education: the number of teachers (LER); the quality of teachers' training (the quality of their education qualifications) and their knowledge level both at subject content and pedagogic content knowledge, including whether they are teaching at the phase level or within the subject specialisation for which they were trained; the existing physical facilities and teaching resources such as equipment and text books; and the funding provision.

The teachers in this study believe that they cannot do what is expected of them in the NCS if classes are big[130] and heterogeneous. In the school background interviews with the principals they all expressed the belief that they have to reduce class size to enable their teachers to teach more meaningfully. The majority of the extra funding they receive from parent fees and fundraising goes to pay for additional teachers (see chapter 3.2.2.1, p. 78) for details). Even the poorest of schools employed additional teachers or teaching assistants. One of principals identifies a major advantage of being a Dinaledi school is that he is allocated extra teachers and other resources (P/Red River/06/09/07).

The teachers in schools that inherited excellent facilities and equipment believe that these resources contribute meaningfully to their ability to deliver quality education: "If you want to photocopy forms for the kids or if there's an activity or something you can do it" (FG2/15/08/07), "I've got my budget, I've got a little library in my classroom so we've got extra books and stuff" (FG2/15/08/07).

5.3.1.2 Learners

In the experience of the teachers, learners' education background, social circumstances and home background, motivation and attitude towards school and their level of discipline and attitude towards authority are factors that can contribute meaningfully to the teachers' being able to deliver quality education. The teachers derive most of their personal satisfaction and reward from their experiences with learners. This is a positive aspect which motivates them to stay in the profession and enhance their morale (see chapter 4.1, p. 10 and 6.2.1, p. 169).

The teachers in the study believe that learners of today are different from the earlier years of their teaching careers. They have a more critical approach to learning, challenging their teachers intellectually and participating more actively in their learning: "The majority you can

[130] Despite research which does not convincingly find that smaller class size, that is, a favourable learner to teacher ratio (LER), results in quality improvements: "Within normal ranges, the presence of fewer students per classroom held no consistent effect on achievement in 11 of 21 analyses (Fuller, 1987: 276).

WitsETD

actually see they are here to learn" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07); "They are not prepared to accept what we tell them and I think that's wonderful" (FG1/08/08/07), and "The nice part is they're now taking part and they ask you questions" (FG4/06/09/07).

The teachers derive meaningfulness from making a difference in these learners' lives. They serve their school community whoever they are: "We're dealing with learners who are from different homes, different cultural rules; they are brought up differently; some of them don't have parents, don't have food, don't have shelter, just backgrounds" (FG3/22/08/07). The teachers empathise and respect their learners' resilience in the face of great hardship which they try hard to understand: "They still come back the next day to school ... they've got that resilience ... I think if my children would go [through] something like that, they won't go to work for the next month!" (FG4/06/09/07). They note the vast differences between their social context and that of many of their learners: "The learners for me in that aspect are worlds apart from my world ... you must have that respect to understand that" (FG4/06/09/07); "'Ma'am, the only way I'll cope in Soweto is by being a skelm', and that made me think that some of them … and I think we don't understand" (FG4/06/09/07); "We forget the environment they come from. We simply don't know the environment they come from" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). The teachers are respectful, encouraging and caring towards these learners. They understand that learners are children who are developing and need support and guidance: "They are kids, and they need to be given continual support. ... So we always bear that in mind that they don't know what is wrong and what is right" (FG3/22/08/07).

The teachers care sincerely for their learners' total well-being and frequently feel guilty for not being and doing enough: "If I had had that understanding and if I knew, then I would have reacted differently" (FG1/08/08/07); but they are also aware of teacher authority: "You need to have a certain distance between you and them so that you can act as an authoritarian figure; but it's important to get the balance between the two [being authoritarian and friendly]" (FG1/08/08/07). The teachers believe the opportunity to develop relationships in extra-mural activities contributes to their ability to deliver quality education because: "Those kids I know better than a lot of the teachers in this school because I spend the time with them. Let me tell you that the very naughty ones are brilliant in my class for me because they play soccer. Yes, but it's the relationship ..." (FG2/15/08/07) and "I learn a lot more about the learners on the sports field than I do in the classroom. The parents will tell you what's happened or whatever and you have a much better relationship with the whole family" (FG1/08/08/07).

WiSER

5.3.1.3 School climate

The teachers identify the following characteristics of school climate as meaningful and enabling in their pursuit of quality education: a clear and meaningful school vision: "It inspires" (FG1/08/08/07); high academic expectations and drive: "the first thing [I think] about this school [is] academic-driven as a compound adjective" (Red River/12/09/07); "It [the vision] is catchy and if you're so passionate about it you're kind of wanting to do the same in your field" (FG1/08/08/07); a focus on protecting teaching time: "I do things quickly at the beginning of the day, the things that are not teaching. When they get to class [I] make them understand what has to be done" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07); a safe, happy environment for learners and staff: "This is a safe and friendly school ... We haven't got this terrible screaming, shouting atmosphere at this school. We don't have this animosity between the pupils where they want to half kill each other" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

Teachers find collegial interaction particularly meaningful: "As a community of teachers there's kind of this unspoken kind of feeling that you have for other teachers, your colleagues ... [you] pick up those interesting ideas. So it's very much an unspoken thing actually, but you do have a feeling of your colleagues, of how dedicated they are" (FG4/06/09/07). It is the collaborative culture of the school that enables a teacher to ask a colleague: "Please tell me what can I do? ... and you can share philosophies" (FG4/06/09/07). In this type of culture a teacher says: "You can hear each other teach, you can see each other teach all the time, you can make comments all the time ... I enjoy talking about, so how did you do it because I have that class next and did this work, and if it didn't then how can I do it better?" (FG1/08/08/07).

Recognising the benefits of teamwork and collaboration, the teachers try to develop a culture of genuine collegiality in the school or areas they are responsible for. They are professionally energised by positive encounters with their colleagues:

> I'm head of subject and head of department, we have subject meetings and in that I'll ask their advice ... I'll say, 'What do you think? Must we do that?' So we do confer and discuss certain things. And then we also do a post mortem. 'Did that assignment work for you? Do you want to do it again? Did it work well for your class?' And we share stories on what happened and ideas that you had in your class, it's amazing. (Celia, Country College/15/08/07)

Working together in a subject team provides professional feedback and support: "We actually have long, long [discussions about] life, the universe, art, the school. [Laughs] It's quite disburdening in many ways ... 'She's said, so why do you do it that way?' And I think to myself, 'Ok, why do I do it that way?'" (FG1/08/08/07).

WISERD

These collaborative activities are instrumental in improving the quality of teaching. Some are formal but many are informal but involve a great deal of professional talk: "We reflect a lot and it also helps. Every break, every free period that you are there, you're talking of what happened and what went wrong, and what was (successful) ..." (FG1/08/08/07); "We'll discuss ... that we see that they've made a break-through and then ... if it's a problem then we'll ... redress that and see how we can fix it" (FG1/08/08/07). Collegiality, including mentoring, is valued by these teachers for the support it gives them, "Grab the opportunity and be an excellent educator" (FG3/22/08/07). It helps them hone their professionals skills: "Helped me see misconceptions that I had" (FG1/08/08/07) and improves lesson delivery: "She definitely shared and helped [me] use best practices" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07); "Mentoring by experienced teachers has allowed me to try different approaches to teaching the subject matter. They have also been encouraging" (FG1/08/08/07); "Helped me to ... think 'out of the box' when preparing my lessons" (FG1/08/08/07).

5.3.1.4 Professional development

Another aspect of a school's teaching culture that contributes meaningfully to the teachers' ability to deliver quality education is the attitude towards professional development and life-long learning. In some schools there is a strong emphasis on the professional development of teachers. One school has set aside every Wednesday afternoon for this. There is a programme for the year and time is given to general development of teachers' professional ability as well as time for specific subject development. Speakers are drawn from amongst the staff and outside experts (DP/Blue Lake/14/07/08). In another school, speakers are invited to address the staff on matters that the teachers have identified as their development needs (P/Tower Hill/17/08/07). Where there is no formal programme the school makes resources available for teachers to attend workshops run by the teacher unions, universities and NGOs (P/Country College/15/08/08). Teachers at less advantaged schools take up opportunities offered by their sponsors (P/Red River/06/09/07). The teachers are open to developing themselves professionally. They may pursue formal programmes to equip them to teach a new subject: "I studied for Tourism when I wanted to make the change from Afrikaans to Tourism" (FG2/15/08/07) or to extend their knowledge "I also did an extra qualification at one stage" (FG2/15/08/07) and short courses and workshops: "We're doing a lot of courses" (FG4/06/09/07), "We've been on some courses now presented by the university that were absolutely wonderful" (FG4/06/09/07). They may also do it less formally through their private reading of professional magazines and journals: "[professional development] does exist, it has

WiSETD

to be done. I mean, it gets done. [It also includes] reading up and reading the Scientific America" (FG2/15/08/07).

Teachers are also willing to share their experience and knowledge both at their own schools and more widely: "We have in-service development: teachers present various things at school and elsewhere" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07). Another teacher expresses his desire to share with others and regrets that he has not been given the opportunity yet: "So I would have loved to do it because I do have things to say. I thought they didn't have enough people to come and stand there and deliver presentations on Maths Literacy" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07).

In summary, the factors in the external environment that contribute meaningfully to teachers' ability to improve the quality of education and which strengthen their professional identity combine conducive classroom culture and teaching climate with positive relationships with learners who want to learn. These factors, combined with the necessary resources, build the internal capacity of school and help teachers to cope with accountability demands external to the school.

5.3.2 The impact of meaningless factors

Teachers experience the absence of the meaningful factors identified above as constraints on their ability to deliver quality. The teachers describe the lack of resources, unsupportive parents, learners with social and emotional problems, discipline problems, a teaching culture that is not conducive for quality teaching and learning, and unreasonable accountability expectations as factors which hinder their ability to improve the quality of education.

5.3.2.1 Inadequate school resources

The legacy of apartheid is noticed most significantly in the resourcing of schools, both from the human and the physical standpoint.[131] The inequalities continue because the government subsidy to schools is inadequate to make up the enormous differences.[132] In some cases old

[131] Formerly Coloured, Indian and African schools lag behind in resources with the latter group being particularly badly off. The disparities have not been redressed yet despite current funding models. In terms of the South African Schools Act, all schools are assigned to a quintile based on a number of factors that indicate the financial rating/privilege/need of the school. Quintile one and two are the poorest schools in the poorest areas and are now fee-free schools, while quintile five schools are the richest in the more affluent areas. School SGBs often challenge the provincial government on their allocation to the quintile because of changes that have taken place in learner populations of the school which result in their rating being high in terms of location and former department privilege but now they serve learners from other poorer, less-advantaged communities.

[132] The wealthier schools can assign greater portions of their budget, supplemented by school fees paid by parents, to improving their facilities, thus maintaining or even creating a bigger gap between the previously disadvantaged and the previously advantaged. The SMTs or SGBs have to access substantial additional funding through fee collection, fund-raising projects or sponsorship to supplement resources provided by the state. Schools in a poor

WiSER

curriculum text books are still being used because of insufficient funding to purchase new ones: "We were promised many to choose from but still use old books from Bantu education, not interesting – not relevant, no pictures" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). The teachers who teach in schools that were most disadvantaged by the apartheid policy are still constrained by inadequate resources: their facilities and equipment for teaching are poor and their professional training is often below the standard required for teaching the NCS.

The next factor that constrains teachers' efforts to deliver quality is the absence of meaningful parental involvement in the schools. Parents who are ill, substance abusers or are trapped in poverty are unable or unwilling to support the teachers in their work. The breakdown of traditional family structures, inadequate housing and the effects of crime on families also affect greatly the work of the teachers who have to take on other functions. This puts a greater load on teachers. Even where parents are not affected by these negative social circumstances the teachers experience inappropriate and unhelpful parental attitudes, such as parents 'handing over their child to the school' (DP/Deep Valley/17/09/07; P/ Tower Hill/17/08/07). Teachers experience the burden of having to do the parents' job as well as their own as constraining.[133] The teachers' drawings (chapter 4.1.1, drawings 3, 4, and 5, pp. 109-111) in which they depict themselves having multiple roles and the "parent" metaphor (4.1.1 on p. 105) evidence this too.

In some communities, a culture of parental involvement in their children's schooling is almost absent. Teachers find that most parents have to be bribed to collect learners' progress reports: "Parents don't understand working together unless something is in it for them ... They come to school when jumble and food parcels are handed out" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). Generally speaking parents of learners in secondary schools often do not monitor homework or check up on their children's performance: "Parents' involvement in general is very poor" (FG2/15/08/07). Some only get to hear about the inadequate performance of their children during parents' evening, which means that remediation cannot begin timeously: "When a parents' evening comes up and the parents come to see you, you can show them, but there your child didn't hand in an assignment, there your child failed his test, that's the reason why your child failed the term" (FG2/15/08/07). Instead of supporting the teachers and school discipline: "The mother lies all the time, so I can't get to work with the mother so that we can make a plan with this child of hers" (FG2/15/08/07) and "The parents are there to complain when things

socio-economic context are not able to obtain very much additional funding from parents or the community, hence their ability to equip themselves in a way that would help teachers to deliver quality education is constrained.

[133] "The SGB is just another weight to drag around; parents are not at all supportive" (P/Tower Hill/17/08/07); "They don't even come to fetch the reports once a term, most are illiterate and unemployed" (DP/Deep Valley/17/09/07); "They're not much help with academic or fund-raising matter" (P/Country College/15/08/08).

WisERD

don't go their way, that's it" (FG2/15/08/07). Some parents have become intimidated by their own children so they cannot play the customary parental role and teachers cannot regard them as a partner in the development of the child: "A lot of kids tell the parents what to do, not the other way around" (FG2/15/08/07).

5.3.2.2 Learners who are educationally unprepared and are unmotivated and ill-disciplined

As shown in chapter 5.3.1.2, p. 155 above, learners can be one of the most meaningful factors operating in the school environment. On the other hand they can also be a factor that hinders the teachers' efforts to deliver quality education.

The teachers' difficulties with learners can be grouped into two categories according to the impact that they have on the teachers' sense of identity and professionalism, particularly with regard to their duty of delivering quality education. The first group includes learners who are educationally not at the stage of learning that they ought to be at because of social and emotional difficulties. Teachers have empathy for these learners and despite the extra time and energy teaching them demands, they commit themselves to this work because it accords with their professional purpose and identity. They want to help these learners achieve quality learning outcomes. It does intensify their work and too much can lead to burnout when coupled with futile external accountability demands. In the second category are learners who are unmotivated and ill-disciplined. Teachers are drained by their interactions with these learners because they seem unable to execute their professional goal to make a difference. With these learners the teachers do not experience positive sustaining interaction. This demoralises them to the extent that some want to leave the profession (see chapter 4.1.3, p. 120).

How do teachers deal with the first group? They: "Give extra lessons/remedial work/consult parents" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07); "Check work daily, extra classes after school, see if they pay attention while I'm teaching, call on them all the time. Study groups, motivate, reflect on what is the problem and assist, involve parents" (FG4/06/09/07); "Discuss methods of catching up with language teachers and parents" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). All these interventions require extra time and energy.

The teachers' task of delivering quality education is made more difficult when learners have social and emotional issues such as the absence of positive role models and healthy activities: "They see no [good] role models"; "dagga and liquor available in the area". Violence is prevalent around them: "I worry about them ... kids die ... the police [are] here today" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07) and an inner-city teacher adds: "The children don't have community ...

WISETD

They float and they move" (FG3/22/08/07). When learners are exposed to adult issues, such as the learner who has returned to school after having her second baby, the teacher struggles to relate appropriately: "The relationship with them is contaminated, I don't treat [them] as children" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). Teachers struggle to build the relationship necessary for teaching and learning with learners who build barriers around themselves to shield themselves from further hurt. Sometimes this takes the form of retreat into silence: "Some learners are so quiet. It is the third term end now and I don't know their voices, have never heard it" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07).

Nevertheless in the face of these challenges, the teachers respond to the learners with sensitivity, empathy, great care and respect. They are troubled by the societal factors that are hindering their learners' progress. They try to help these learners by providing guiding principles and support ("by giving them advice as a parent ... tell them how important it is to be educated" (FG3/22/08/07) but the difficulties in some cases are staggering: "Apart from language [they cannot understand the LOLT of the school] you have ... Mandrax ... outside here, on the streets. When they get home they're exposed to all the things" (FG3/22/08/07). They find it emotionally and intellectually very troubling that some problems appear insurmountable.

With the second group of learners the teachers point to ill-discipline as a major constraint: "You find them enjoying that free period, enjoying the substitution period, not even talking about school work" (FG3/22/08/07). They also note a poor work ethic: "If you give the learners tasks they will come with stories" (FG3/22/08/07), disinterest in learning: "Even if you give a learner a worksheet, then you say, come on guys, let's interact, what's going on? They will keep quiet and look at you. You have to do everything" (FG3/22/08/07). Teachers complain about learners being reluctant to read: "They don't want to go and read the books" (FG1/08/08/07); not taking responsibility for their learning: "They never thought to go and find out the answer ... they would prefer somebody else to do it for them"; "There's a lack of curiosity"; and lack of commitment: "It's like they are saying that the school is not a priority" (FG1/08/08/07); lack of persistence: "So if they don't understand a word, if I don't define it, they won't go home and look in a dictionary", and learners' need for instantaneous solutions: "They want it instantly, they want it now" (FG1/08/08/07). A teacher sums up his experience: "Children are dead inside; [they] don't have ambition" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07).

The teachers blame some of these deficiencies on the OBA policy that permits learners extra attempts and easy promotion requirements: "When you start checking, this learner hasn't

WitsETD

submitted, and they won't feel any pressure because they know that FET OBE says a learner cannot fail[134], a learner cannot get zero, so you give them a chance" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07). They also blame the teaching methodology in primary schools and in the lower grades of secondary school: "they were spoon-fed ... But they've never been taught to think" (FG2/15/08/07) and the inability to listen caused, in the teacher's opinion, by television: "a big fat hearing problem" (FG2/15/08/07).

Another difficulty teachers experience is learners' attitude towards authority: "You have to prove yourself trustworthy and respectable" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). Some learners view teachers as their equals: "Now they don't see you there [indicating a high level], they see you on their same level, or even below" (FG2/15/08/07). Defiance and resistance are common causing some teachers to want to give up the teaching profession: "I lie on a bed for the next three hours just to get over all this trauma of fighting for the learners' attention" (FG2/15/08/07).

Almost every teacher in the study experiences the emphasis on learners' rights as a problem: "These rights affect discipline negatively ... I am not a fan of too many rights" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). They identify the failure to emphasise: "[children's] responsibilities that is coming with the rights" (FG3/22/08/07) as a major cause of the prevalent disrespect for teachers' authority. Learners are not serious about their learning and teachers feel disempowered and unable to exert discipline: "Our learners can just do and say whatever they like … they will do whatever they like and they won't even learn anything because they are not listening to you" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07).

5.3.2.3 Unsupportive teaching culture and uncooperative colleagues

Teacher colleagues who are "just doing duty, not fully committed" (Albert, Deep Valley/ 17/09/07) are experienced as a source of irritation and disappointment to their hard-working colleagues. The absence of a collegial culture in the school: "I am an outsider; they are protective of their territory" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07) constrains the teachers who have then to be self-reliant and manage without professional support and the benefit of teamwork. A teacher identifies the IQMS policy as an example of a process intended to contribute meaningfully to quality improvement if there is a supportive, collaborative teaching culture. However, if this is not present the process can be damaging to the teacher and does not help

[134] The teacher feels this way because although the assessment policy does not say this, it is the practice of officials to refuse to accept zero for any task and because he believes requirements for promotion are so low that failure in the lower grades is very difficult.

WitsETD

improve the quality of the teacher's practice: "Good if it's done to help somebody. Bad if it's done to spite somebody". The professional growth of the teachers and ultimately improvement in quality is undermined when a culture of mistrust and suspicion arises because teachers do not fulfil their roles in the spirit envisaged in the policy: "[IQMS] creates some conflicts among teachers because the evaluator cannot go round telling people what you got" (FG3/22/08/07). Internal capacity and accountability is not developed in these circumstances.

Some schools, encouraged by GDE officials, set achievement targets for teachers. Teachers believe it creates competition amongst staff and experience this as stressful, constraining and disempowering: "[It] puts so much stress on teachers, how to actually [reach the target] then really you sacrifice just to get that standard" (FG4/06/09/07) because the targets are "very artificial" (FG2/15/08/07) set by people who are not fully aware of all the contextual difficulties the teacher faces: "It depends on who your learners are "(FG2/15/08/07). Targets promote competitiveness rather than collegiality: "It's become more of a competition. I mean, I know for myself, I've sat at cluster meetings and the teachers say, 'What did your matrics get?'" (FG2/15/08/07) and even dishonesty: "You could set a nice easy paper because somebody out there has told you [that] you've got to get 75[%]" (FG4/06/09/07).

In summary, at the level of the school the teachers experience a lack of meaningful support in the performance of their professional responsibility when the school resources are inadequate; the community and parents are unable to support the school and their children's learning; and when learners have educational, social or emotional problems or lack motivation and discipline. From their remarks teachers give a clear indication of the roles the parties at the school level must play to fulfil their contractual obligations in order for the teachers to deliver quality.

5.4 OVERALL CONCLUSION

How quality teachers experience the factors operating at the national, provincial and school levels has been discussed. The extent to which factors operating at these levels enable or constrain quality teaching have been shown. Teachers' professional autonomy is enabled when the NDE provides clear and reasonable policy and the GDE supports it in an efficient and effectual manner coupled with reasonable accountability demands, such as the curriculum and assessment protocol (NPRR) and when school structures and practices, particularly the teaching culture and school climate, are focused on enabling teachers to deliver quality education When these positive and thus meaningful factors are absent; when parents are unsupportive; when they are faced with learners with educational, social, emotional,

WisERD

motivational and discipline problems; when their colleagues and the management of their schools impose complex demands and do not provide support, the teachers experience these as meaningless, or an attack on their professional autonomy. They feel constrained in the performance of their professional responsibility and their professional identity is damaged.

WitsETD

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers, in the context of new forms of regulatory controls and accountability measures aimed at improving the quality of education outcomes, experience their professionalism. The findings seek to explain three questions: why teachers believe their professionalism is under attack, what they believe can improve the quality of learning in their schools, and what model of teacher regulation would be appropriate in view of the flexible and open curriculum that guides their work, more specifically, their teaching. I begin this chapter by explaining why in pursuing quality improvement, I believe, the focus should be on teachers and the context/system in which they do their work. This is followed by a review of the findings described in chapters 4 and 5 and using the metaphor of a "nest of systems", explained below, I discuss what these findings contribute to our understanding of the three key issues identified above and their implications. The chapter concludes with some recommendations.

The aim of this chapter is to single out the constitutive features of an accountability model that supports teachers' work and regulates quality.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The centrality of the teacher

The story of my research journey described in chapter 1.5, p. 16, points to what many studies and researchers have claimed (Coleman, 1966; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Carnoy, 1999; Goodson *et al.*, 2006; Hargreaves and Goodson, 2006) (see chapter 2.3, p. 62). Fullan (2001) sums this up succinctly: "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and complex as that" (p. 115). For there to be improvement in the quality of educational outcomes recognition of the centrality of the teacher, the "sharp edge" (Bascia and Hargreaves, 2000, in Frost and Durant, 2003: xi) in the process, is required: "real and lasting improvement depends on individual teachers' commitment and enthusiasm for improvement and this simply cannot be dictated from above" (Frost and Durant, 2003: 1). In addition, the 1966 Coleman Report identified teachers' characteristics as the most influential factor on learners achieving results better than those expected for their social class (Mayeske, 1973).

For these reasons, acknowledging that "the role of teachers is pivotal" for realising improvement in the quality of education outcomes (Carnoy, 1999: 79), this study explores teachers' experiences of an attack on their professionalism, in view of the demands for improvement, in five "achieving schools" in Gauteng, South Africa.

WitsETD

Writing in the South African context with particular reference to apartheid legacy's "stubborn practices", Soudien (2007) highlights the fact that teachers alone cannot solve all the quality problems (p. 191). Muller and Roberts (2000) give support to this argument when they describe the classroom (and by implication the teacher within it), as "in an embedded *nest of systems* including the school, the school support environment, the district, the province, and the national department" (p. 2). Consistent with these views, this study also focuses on the systems and practices external to the teacher which structure their experience of regulation. In order to explore the teachers' experience of the regulatory system at all these levels, I will now examine what I call metaphorically the "nest of systems". I use this metaphor to understand the impact of these systems on teachers' perceptions of their ability to deliver quality education.

6.1.2 The "nest of systems"

I use the metaphor of the "nest" to aid my understanding of how teachers experience their "embeddedness" in the "nest of systems" (Muller and Roberts, 2000).[135] I investigate the teachers' beliefs and experiences concerning their dependence on, independence and interdependence of the "systems" of the "nest" to discover ultimately the impact each system has on their ability to deliver quality education. I do so by means of exploring why the teachers experience these "systems" of the "nest" as attacking their professionalism and intensifying their work.

I first look closely inside the "nest" at the "bird" and then at the "nest". I study the identity of the "bird" and its relationship with its "nest". In other words, I examine, in relation to the teachers' location in their teaching context, their professional traits and professional identity as well as their beliefs and experiences relating to the tension they experience between freedom and restraint, or between professional autonomy and external accountability demands. The study then looks at the structure of the "nest": its "systems" or layers. The classroom is the layer closest to the "bird". This is the layer in which it nests and performs its function of nurturing the eggs to the point of the nestlings flying off to fend independently for themselves. The next layer is the school, the staff and learners, followed by the community including the parents of the learners at the school. The following layer is the Provincial Education Department (PDE) and School District and the outside layer, furthest from the "bird", is the National Department of Education (NDE). I examine the ways in which these structural elements of the "nest" support and aid the "bird" in raising the young. The study seeks to find

[135] As with all metaphors and analogies they cannot be extended indefinitely. Inevitably the comparisons fail at some point. I beg the reader's indulgence when non sequiturs occur, such as the mother bird being a teacher and the nestlings not baby teachers but mostly rearing babies of other occupations.

WitsETD

out, for example, how accommodating the "nest" is, or do the birds experience firmness and security in the outer framework and whether the middle layers serve as connections between the inner and outer layers or whether they take a different shape and direction? Figure 3a and 3b below serve as a metaphorical link to Figure 2 on p. 144 which provides the literal description of the "layers" in this "nest of systems" and their roles.

Figure 3a and 3b – The "nest of systems"





3a 3b

6.2 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

Three conceptual claims provide the framework for this research study:

- Teachers thrive on a vibrant professional identity and their conception of quality is mediated by their experiences of professionalism.
- External and internal accountability need to be aligned for quality improvement reforms to succeed and be sustainable.
- Teacher regulation is necessary for quality improvement, but it requires conditions that recognise the value of teacher leadership.

In this section I structure the analysis of the findings around these three claims. In terms of the first claim I show that the teachers believe that there is a contractual relationship between all the role players in the education system and they should fulfil their responsibilities, including respecting teacher professionalism which requires an appreciation of the delicate balance

between too much autonomy and too much control. In the discussion of the second claim the concept of reciprocal obligation is identified. Relevant support must be provided to teachers to enable them to meet accountability demands. Specifically their instructional capacity needs to be developed so that the school's internal accountability will be such that external and internal accountability will align. In the analysis of the third claim I identify the conditions that teachers in "achieving schools" believe are necessary for improving quality. Once again role players must fulfil their roles. External regulation and support should focus on what really matters and the culture of the school must be such that it supports professionalism.

6.2.1 Claim 1 - Teachers thrive on a vibrant professional identity and their conception of quality is mediated by their experiences of professionalism

As in the literal world of birds, I find in the "nest" a fragile creature whose purpose and mission in life is to raise the young nestlings to the point at which they can fly off and survive independently in the environment. I note a very strong contrast between the teachers' beliefs that show a very strong sense of professional purpose and professionalism and their reported experience of threats and undermining of their professional identity. Teachers describe their identity in images that range from very strong: "Church Square", to very weak: an over-burdened slow-moving "snail". They have an empowered, purposeful identity at one moment under particular conditions and at the next moment, under different conditions, they feel disempowered and disabled. The study shows an unstable, fragmented and fragile identity. The remarkable reality, however, that the study shows about the teachers in the "achieving schools", is that most of the birds, whether they are "old ducks" or relatively "young chicks", whether they are in well-structured nests hosted in leafy trees or seemingly random collections of sticks balanced on a lamp post, whether they are nurturing golden eggs, cuckoos' eggs, snakes' eggs or their own offspring, attend to their duty assiduously, day and night if necessary, until the job is done. The teachers display a strong internal sense of responsibility to do their job properly.

The study shows that teachers believe that there should be a contractual relationship in operation between all the role players in the education process, amongst the systems in the "nest". All parties must play their role: the teachers contract to deliver quality education in the classroom. The other parties: the NDE, PDE, school, parents and learners must fulfil their respective responsibilities, providing the framework, support and appropriate co-operation.

As a party in this contractual relationship and embedded in the "nest of systems" the teachers accept some restrictions on autonomy. They know that in order to achieve quality education

WitsETD

delivery for all they need a policy framework that provides boundaries and certainty regarding curriculum and assessment requirements. They ask for acceptable parameters of classroom management and standards of teaching such as using all the teaching time available, observing regulations regarding discipline of learners and a professional code of ethics. For these teachers restrictions make sense when they prevent an anarchic situation, one that would arise if every teacher said: "This is my house. No one will tell me what to do in my house ... Then even the principal will lose control of the school" (FG3/22/08/07). When restrictions are applied at the right place and in order to effect improvements (rather than compliance and uniformity) the teachers welcome them: "I've got my structures and my rules ... the bigger picture ... you know exactly what is expected from you, so whatever you do will be fine if it stays in that framework" (FG4/06/09/07).

The ideal conception of teacher professional autonomy which emerges from the teachers' accounts entails "a delicate balance" between a desirable level of autonomy and accountability requirements which are educationally sound. From the teachers' perspective, limitations are reasonable provided the rationale for the limitation is in the interest of delivering quality education. This applies particularly to teachers who are already strongly controlled by their own internal accountability demands which direct their exercise of autonomy in the best interests of their clients "... it's me being accountable for what I do. And doing it the best I can do it and meeting the needs of what I need to do" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07); "It [autonomy] comes with the responsibility of getting everything done without having someone checking over your shoulder" (FG1/08/08/07). Worthwhile repeating, this accords with Darling-Hammond's requirement: "Professionals are obligated to do whatever is best for the client, not what is easiest, most expedient, or even what the client might want" (1989: 15, 16). The teachers' beliefs indicate that this balance is achieved when there is alignment between their own criteria and external accountability demands.

The other parties, namely: the systems or components of the "nest" must perform their specific duties in terms of this contractual understanding that the teachers have. The teachers believe that the school (comprising the learners, parents and the community in which the school is located) must provide the necessary resources and support what happens in the classroom, including learners doing their work and being disciplined; the PDEs and school districts must mediate policy from the NDE, provide resources, support the schools in their work and build teacher capacity and make demands on teachers which focus on their core task, which is learning and teaching. The teachers believe that the NDE must provide a framework of clearly articulated policy that will meaningfully assist teachers to deliver quality education. Instead,

WJSER

the teachers describe the "excessive and disruptive interference of the department of education" (FG1/08/08/07), which they feel is restricting their professional judgment and attacking their professionalism. In the opinion of teachers, when this contractual relationship is damaged the "nest of systems" becomes dysfunctional and fails to sustain their work in the classroom ("The centre cannot hold ..."[136]) thus threatening their professionalism or their capacity to deliver quality education.

The teachers made a deliberate choice to become teachers, they are confident in their academic and professional ability, are passionate and committed to what they understand their professional purpose to be, and they find their teaching and learning relationships with their learners professionally satisfying. Their identity is stable, secure and empowering when their beliefs about the nature and purpose of their work are confirmed by their experiences and when, in the face of great difficulties, they hold fiercely to the ideal of their work as service. The source of teachers' strength is internal; it is informed by their ideal of education as a service. They see themselves in terms of strong positive images, such as "a warm sun", "eagle", "bright comet", performing their primary work as, for example, a "magician" or "knowledge tank" in a consistent, trustworthy and purposeful manner. When they enjoy a balance between freedom and control, when their professional judgment and internal sense of responsibility align with the regulations, and when they understand their purposefulness for delivering quality education, their sense of professionalism is enhanced.

The teachers' professional identity is threatened, insecure and disempowered when their professionalism is not respected by all levels of the system. For example, the NDE expects teachers to implement a curriculum policy framework which they perceive is too complex, unclear or too long (even more so for teachers who are insufficiently trained for its conceptual demands). They claim that many learners are unmotivated and badly disciplined: "All 200 of us must pass never mind our laziness" (Drawing 9, p. 122). The GDE insists on teachers producing copious paperwork evidence of their work in the form of lesson plans in a prescribed format or files with dividers, meaningless tasks in the eyes of teachers: "I became an educator to help and develop and not to do admin. Teaching always comes first" (FG4/06/09/07). This raises the teachers' "political nostalgia", that is teachers feeling insulted and undermined by standardised reform which ignores their professional expertise and turns them into curriculum technicians, thus 'choosing' (so-called) "compliance over creativity" (Goodson *et al*, 2006: 55). At the school level the teachers experience demands from the principal ("My school has

[136] Extract from "The Second Coming" by W.B. Yeats, see discussion in chapter 6.2.2 below.

WitsETD

always been doing well" (Drawing 9)) to maintain past higher standards despite the shortcomings in the current learners' educational background. In some of the schools the Heads of Departments apply threats to obtain compliance with demands that are unimportant (in the teacher's eyes) for quality education ("I want my files by tomorrow or else I will write a bad report about you!" (Drawing 9)). In these circumstances the teachers depict themselves in drawings or describe themselves in images that signify loss (of meaning, of power, of values). For example, the "Workhorse" (Drawing 1, p. 107) image conveys the powerlessness of the teacher who is compelled to finish the work (NDE portfolio assessment requirements) although it does not accord with her purpose. The fact that this "Workhorse" grimly sweats it out at half past one in the morning shows either a high level of internal responsibility (duty and commitment), or compliance, to do the work. The teacher's image of herself as a "sinking ship" that once was "something else" (FG2/15/08/07) sums up the demoralisation teachers feel when their workload is heavy and they consider much of it to be meaningless. The image of the "shining diamond lost in the sand" (FG2/15/08/07) shows that teachers feel uncared for, abandoned and isolated and their value is unappreciated.

The teachers feel attacked when requirements and bureaucratic controls are applied without due consideration to the teacher or her context. Some of the controls that anger teachers include: having to attend the same basic/generic training as teachers who do not understand the revised conceptual approach to the subject; having to use the same lesson planning template whether they are experienced or not; having to do certain types of activities such as modes of assessment with very big classes and in small spaces; having to teach concepts that require equipment, which they do not have; being required to do the same prescribed assessment tasks as schools in totally different contexts and with learners who have vastly different backgrounds, knowledge and experience. Teachers find this an unacceptable limitation on their autonomy; they believe it springs from the employer's mistrust of their professional competence. They find these restrictions hindering their ability to do the best for their learners and to respond to their needs. As one of the teachers claims, the consequences of this are frightening. She believes that reliance on prescriptive controls such as these has diminished her ability to act autonomously and confidently when she is given the freedom to do so. The irony that this teacher reports on is that teachers have begun to ask for more prescription in order to feel secure. This indicates a serious undermining of their sense of professional judgment and reveals a weak professional identity, similar to the one the apartheid government strove hard to create through its bureaucratic and autocratic control systems (Morrow, 1989; Jansen, in Lewin *et al.,* 2003; Carrim, in Lewin *et a.l,* 2003). Soudien (2007) identifies the

WitsETD

product of this undermining system as an intractable force that is still hindering quality improvement in South Africa.

The factors that breathe life into the teachers' identity and sustain their purpose and those that break down and suck the purpose from the teachers' work operate alongside one another in the teachers' work environment. Drawings 7 and 8 on pp. 113 and 120 show this reality and explain the instability and vacillating ambivalence in the teachers' identity. The drawings depict two sides of the teacher. In one half of the drawing we see a confident, happy teacher, striving to meet high professional standards, knowledgeable, passionate about her subject and purpose (with a smile on her face quoting from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and holding a visual aid), disciplined, very responsible ("Wanting to create a safe and magical learning environment"; "learning"; "caring"), respectful ("Good morning, class"), and deriving professional satisfaction from positive relationships within the learning and teaching context ("the happiest place in the world"; "The girls"; and four smiling faces saying "hee hee"). The other half shows the under-valued ("Salary", "People saying I have a half day job"; "Making ends meet"), unsupported ("More encouragement needed"; "Support needed"), demoralised ("Stress") and over-burdened teacher who is frustrated by menial types of accountability measures ("Filling in forms"; compiling "blasted files" in a prescribed way with specified "dividers"; completing the complex/meaningless "blooming [IQMS] document") and low quality DoE training. The drawings show clearly what motivates them (interaction and positive relationships with learners, creating exciting lessons, sharing their passion for their subject) and what demoralises (excessive paperwork, low quality training, poor salary, lack of respect, lack of support and encouragement, work overload and intensification) . In Drawing 8, the teacher goes so far as to depict herself as dead, killed by paperwork, and with a diminished identity: she spells her name without a capital letter, "a dead torie"[137].

The pictures and teachers' statements confirm the view of Hargreaves (2001) that if teachers are using high levels of energy instead of "high leverage" strategies[138] to achieve their high quantity and high quality outputs, they are, in effect, achieving "short-term effectiveness by burn-out" (p. 489). Teachers have to be educators, administrators, "Metro police", "bus driver", "tour guide", "entertainer", sports coach, psychologist, and parents to learners. They have to handle the simultaneous demands of the learners, parents, national and provincial government policy, the school, their own family, and their personal needs. They cope by attending to them by weighing up priorities and competing demands. Sometimes they comply superficially (take

[137] Her name is Torie, a short form of Victoria. I have identified the teacher's name with her permission.
[138] Teacher energy inputs are low but they leverage high quantity and high quality outputs.

WitsETD

short cuts where possible) or even deceitfully pretend to comply (magazine pages inserted in files to give the appearance of many lesson plans). They generally address the most urgent need, meeting external demands before attending to their own needs and priorities. The important things are often sacrificed for the urgent, and often less meaningful and rewarding: "I do the one that's needed soonest" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07); "crisis management" (FG2/12/08/07). They only manage by extending the hours they spend on their work: "You feel guilty if you don't sit up to a certain hour at night, and you think, I'm falling behind" (FG1/08/08/07); "I had to mark this whole holiday" (FG2/15/08/07); "I cannot see how any teacher can teach without doing a lot of work after hours. I think it's impossible" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07).

If the balance between the positive "psychic rewards" (Lortie, in Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 36) and the enervating forces (see Drawings 4 and 11 on pp. 110 and 125) is disrupted, teachers become too burnt out and demoralised to remain in the profession. Drawing 11 shows an exhausted, energy-sapped teacher on a treadmill. He experiences no positive input from a sustaining source, such as the learners, and, as the picture depicts, literally, he is destined for burn-out. He cannot carry on like that. Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) recognise that in the context of all the interventions aimed at improving quality and accountability the following occurs: "a kind of distended professionalism, where teachers are stretched so far by their new responsibilities they almost tear apart with the workload and strain" (p. 17).

In sum, the study finds that teachers in these "achieving schools" are angry, stressed, demoralised, frustrated and over-extended. Like the teacher in Noguera (2005) who said, "They're just applying the pressure, and I am fed up with it" (p. 1), these teachers resent the pressure which they feel is applied on them without the type of support that presents real solutions that can lead to improvement.

Their belief in the value of their work and personal choice to become a teacher, enjoyment of their teaching and learning activities, positive interaction and relationships with their learners are some of the aspects that "glue" their fragmented professional identity. This suggests that conceptions of professionalism (discussed in more detail in chapter 6.3.2, p. 190 below), such as "democratic professionalism" (Whitty, 2006: 14; Sachs, 1999: 7) "interactive professionalism" (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 3, 4) and Goodson and Hargreaves's (1996) preferred version of "postmodern professionalism" resonate with the teachers' aspired identity. The glue is weak. The trust between teachers and the other role players, in particular with national and provincial government has been lost. It is as if the structuring and protective

WitsETD

components of the "nest" are abandoning their bird and replacing them with elements that poke through the classroom layer and monitor the bird's activities not considering who the bird in the "nest" is and where the "nest" is situated. The NDE outer layer tears the foundation by sending unclear messages, by coating the nest with insufficiently specified curriculum statements and by trying to restructure the nest too quickly and too intensely. The GDE further weakens the structure by failing to weave the connections between NDE policies and the teachers in the classrooms but rather disrupts and interferes in the nesting that is taking place thus creating further insecurity. Any feathering of her nest that the mother bird may have done to protect the nestlings and make the nest a "snug place"[139] is continuously threatened by these intrusions. Under these circumstances the nest cannot maintain its integrity; the bird flaps her broken wings, seeks solutions, tries to ignore the damage and continues to work hard at nurturing her chicks in some sort of less than ideal, makeshift nest.

6.2.2 Claim 2 - Internal and external accountability need to be aligned for quality improvement reforms to succeed and be sustainable

The purpose of an accountability system is to focus the resources and capacities of an organisation to a particular end. However, Elmore (2004) emphasises that: "Accountability systems can't mobilise resources that schools don't have. The capacity to improve precedes and shapes schools' responses to the external demands of accountability systems" (p. 117) or stated differently: "Internal accountability precedes external accountability and is a precondition for any process of improvement" (*ibid*: 114). This claim emphasises that the greater the internal accountability of the school, the greater the likelihood that the teachers are able to meet external accountability demands.

Winch (1996) speaks about a reciprocal obligation between government, teachers and learners:

> Thus teachers are under an obligation to students and children not to waste their time and effort. Children are under an obligation not to waste the time of fellow pupils and their teachers. The government is under an obligation not to waste the time of the teachers. All these obligations are moral ones that arise from the same requirement of reciprocal fairness and justice ... (*ibid*: 4)

Winch argues that the government is morally and politically accountable to citizens (tax payers) for quality services based on the notion of "mutual obligation and the keeping of promises" (p. 2). Winch points out that, in the case of education, mutual obligation is about how the time and energy of those who work in schools is used to produce return on service.

[139] Extract from a definition of a nest in the *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2002: 781).

WISETD

Elmore's call for aligning external and internal accountability and Winch's notion of "mutual obligation" are similar to the concept of a contractual relationship which is how the teachers in the study describe their expectations of the other stakeholders in the education process (see chapter 4.1.3, p. 120). This is an important finding in this study and it is consistent with the literature. The finding can be formulated in the following way: The delivery of quality education is conditioned upon all parties fulfilling their contractual obligations. This state is expressed as an alignment between internal and external accountability.

The teachers in the study describe, both in direct terms and indirectly (through their critique of the factors that they experience as constraining), what they believe contributes towards the delivery of quality education. The study groups these factors into those operating at the internal level of the individual teacher and those operating at the external level of the teaching environment.

The second claim of this study is that there needs to be alignment between teachers' personal and professional capacity or internalised professionalism (the individual teacher level - the bird in the "nest of systems", hereafter referred to as "capacity"), internal accountability (the school level - the layer of the nest closest to the bird) and external accountability (the system level - the outer/distant layers of the nest) in order for teachers and schools to contribute meaningfully to improving the quality of learning. The study suggests that for teachers in achieving schools the focus of this alignment is on strengthening teachers' capacity because it is their experience of professionalism that mediates their conception of quality (Claim 1, discussed in chapter 6.2.1 above). For this I draw on Cohen and Ball's (1999) concept of the "triad" which, I argue, provides a useful framework to describe what the teachers believe can enable them to improve the quality of learning in their classrooms.

"Capacity", "internal accountability" and "external accountability" are the three main elements of alignment. "Capacity" is evidenced at the level of the individual teacher. Calhoun and Joyce (1998) refer to it as "internalised professionalism" and Cohen (1995) describe it as "internal regulatory systems ... by which professionals discriminate good, bad and mediocre work and hold themselves accountable" (p. 15). Borrowing from Cohen and Ball (1999), teachers' capacity refers specifically to the relationship constructed in teaching between three crucial elements: teachers, students and materials[140] (known as the "triad") that are essential for instruction (p. 2). Cohen and Ball call it "instructional capacity". In their view "Instructional

[140] I do not discuss students or materials except in relation to teachers' interactions because the focus of the study is on teachers' beliefs and experience.

WisEJD

capacity - the capacity to produce worthwhile and substantial learning - is a function of the interaction among these elements" (p. 2) and is fundamental to teachers' capacity and to the internal accountability of the school. Instructional capacity enables teachers more easily to meet external accountability demands. Christie *et al*. (2007) express a similar belief:

> Student achievement does not stem from management, governance and leadership, crucial as these are. It stems from the smallest unit in the system, from the hard-to-reach core practices of classroom activities, from the quality of learning in interactions between teachers, learners and materials. And in this teachers play a crucial role. (p. 107)

"Internal accountability", on the other hand, operates at the level of the school. Teachers with high levels of capacity working together in a school create a school culture that demonstrates a high level of internal accountability. This is manifested in "a shared language of professional discourse, professional socialisation leading to shared norms and standards of work, traditions of common work on teaching and learning, social and economic support for demanding instruction, and professional norms and incentives that support improvement" (Cohen and Ball, 1999: 28). Schools with high levels of internal accountability demonstrate "strong inner capacities" and "sense of agency" (Christie *et al.*, 2007). Their research shows that "building the capacity of teachers (their knowledge, skill and use of resources) is a crucial dimension" and "is a component of the internal accountability that enables the schools to meet the demands of external accountability, manifested in good learner performance" (p. 114).

The demands of government, school boards, the community and other external sources on teachers and schools to account for performance/delivery focus on, for example, curriculum, use of time, learning outcomes, and parental involvement (Honig and Hatch, 2004: 16). These demands constitute external accountability. Centralised accountability measures such as high-stake testing, performance- and standards-based accountability are examples of external accountability measures which arise from society's expectation that the education sector should be more responsive and accountable for the quality of outcomes. The source is external to the teacher and the school.

When those demanding accountability are operating on the false assumption that the teachers know what to do in order to improve, that is, they have the capacity and just need the will to do what is necessary, we have the case of external accountability not being aligned with capacity. This model is false in thinking that sanctions and rewards, "demand-pull" measures, will hold teachers and schools accountable and will provide direction, set standards and monitor outcomes (Taylor, 2002: 15) and improvement will follow. The shortcoming of this conception

WiSETD

Fuhrman (1999) argues, is the insufficient attention given to "teacher competencies and school conditions that affect the effort-to-achievement calculus" (p. 9). Fullan (2001) argues that if the individual teacher does not understand what is required, the improvement strategy will fail (pp. 36, 37). Hence there is a need for coherence between external demands, the capacity of the teachers, and the internal accountability of the school. This takes place by building the capacity of teachers and their sense of professionalism and professional accountability or building an "efficacious attitude" (Datnow, 2005: 136).

Different types of schools require different types of capacity-building. In the case of schools such as those Rosenholtz (1989) calls "moving schools" (quoted in Ainscow and Hopkins, 1992), teachers are more likely to improve their practices when they adopt ways of working that are consistent with their own aspirations as well as the current reform agenda (p. 79). "Moving schools" demonstrate capacity within the school, that is, internal accountability, which stems from: teacher learning, collaboration with colleagues, a direct focus on teaching, debates and disagreements that culminate in unity and good relations; collegial support; different teachers exercising leadership roles; student involvement vision, and celebration of success. Harnessing the power of these factors builds the capacity of the teachers within the school resulting in teachers feeling more powerful and confident about their work (*ibid*: 79-81); they have "capacity" to deliver quality. Internal accountability consequently aligns with external accountability. On the other hand, the "stuck" schools, where learner achievement is lower and teachers work alone and rarely ask for help (*ibid*: 79), are doubly constrained because individual teachers do not have capacity and the schools do not demonstrate internal accountability; capacity is lacking entirely. Teachers in these schools require capacity-building strategies that do not depend on the schools' capacity (internal accountability).

The "one size fits all" approach does not lead to quality improvement; it is a waste of resources (Hopkins *et al*., 1998) and a cause for resentment and de-professionalisation. The success of the Quality Learning Project (QLP)[141] provides evidence of the efficacy of an improvement strategy that combines demand and support factors that are specific and relevant to the contexts.

[141] A Business Trust Project in partnership with the National Department of Education and the corporate sector (Taylor and Prinsloo, 2005: 2) worked with 524 high schools across all nine provinces for a period of five years is discussed in chapter 2.1.7, Table 2, p 40-43). The HSRC evaluated the project at three stages and published four reports on it (HSRC, 2001, 2003, 2005a, 2005b).

WitsETD

The beliefs and experiences of teachers in the study point to a need to re-professionalise teaching and the profession in order to enable their development of instructional capacity. True instructional capacity that delivers improvement requires of teachers:

> ... conceptions of knowledge, understanding of content, and flexibility of understanding; acquaintance with students' knowledge and ability to relate to, interact with, and learn about students; and their repertoire of means to represent and extend knowledge, and to establish classroom environments. (Cohen and Ball, 1999: 3)

The teachers in "achieving schools" describe what instructional capacity means in practice when they describe how they perceive "quality teachers" manage the relationships between the elements of the triad: students, teachers and materials. In the following paragraphs I discuss what the teachers believe contributes towards building their capacity as seen via the triad.

For quality education delivery, the teachers in the study believe the starting point is to ensure that all teachers are "quality teachers". They describe what they believe are the characteristics (personal and professional qualities) of "quality teachers". Following the "triad" conception, "quality teachers" perform their work by means of teacher/learner interactions, teacher/materials interactions and lastly, how the teachers manage the learner/materials interaction. The quality and purposefulness of these interactions determine the quality of the learning outcomes.

The first dimension of the "triad" is the teacher/learner interaction. "Quality teachers" demonstrate worthiness that invites learners to engage in the learning relationship. "Quality teachers" are trustworthy, committed, dedicated: "dedication in all spheres" (FG1/08/08/07); "It's quality all day every day" (FG1/08/08/07); "Doing what I know I SHOULD be doing" (FG1/08/08/07). They uphold a high standard of professional ethics: "Certain standards must be met – if you are able to meet them then you are a professional. Professionals go the extra mile. They are clinical about their work" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07); "A professional is somebody who understands that this is a very responsible job and does everything in their power to meet their obligations" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07). They are worthy role models: "A role model – how you are, transmits to another" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07); "Set an example for the learners … so the learners have to look up to you and think … one day in the future, they will want to be like you" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07).

"Quality teachers" try to understand the learners: "Put yourself in somebody else's shoes" (FG1/08/08/07), empathising and caring about them: "And you have to like young people,

WitsETD

because otherwise you're going to hate your job" (FG1/08/08/07), respecting and supporting them: "You can go to class with the most wonderful lesson, but if you can't connect with your learners, if you don't have empathy for them, if you don't have a relationship with them, I don't believe you'll succeed" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07). "Quality teachers" understand that many "discipline" issues stem from underlying social problems and unmet basic needs: "The learners are worlds apart from my world ... they've been to hell and back" (FG4/06/09/07), and they turn disciplinary interactions into learning situations:

> They need borders ... Because when they go and work ... and that's how I try to explain it … you are going to have a boss that's going to give you certain rules and regulations, and if you don't stick to it, you're going to get into trouble. It's going to make your life miserable. So it's not because I'm an educator. That's life. Everywhere there's a code of conduct. (FG4/06/09/07)

"Quality teachers" have developed techniques for managing (disciplining) learners when the interactions require it. These teachers understand their professional purpose is to serve all learners, to see all of them grow and develop through quality education; they do not give up on difficult or slow learners: "We prepare them [learners] in every possible aspect we possibly can for the outside world ... come out with their humanity and dignity intact ... intellectual skills but also the emotional and social skill ... they become good, well- rounded citizens" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07); "[We prepare them] to be competitive and survivors in this world ... responsible, successful South African/world citizens" (FG1/08/08/07).

For effective interactions between teachers and learners teachers require learners to play their role: respect teacher authority, behave in a disciplined manner, approach studying with commitment and demonstrate a good work ethic: "When they get to class make them understand what has to be done. Learners have to be disciplined; they need to know that when they go to school they are in uniform; they have to respect the educators before they enter the class" (Albert, Deep Valley/15/09/07). The quality of learning is compromised when the learners do not fulfil their role as diligent, reliable and self-motivated learners. This is the part of their work that the teachers find most difficult: "I mean for investigative, self discovery, even if you give a learner a worksheet, then you say, come on guys, let's interact, what's going on? They will keep quiet and look at you. You have to do everything" (FG3/22/08/07).

Skilled "quality teachers" use their "repertoire of means" (Cohen and Ball, 1999: 2) to create a classroom environment that stimulates meaningful interactions. In their lessons "quality teachers" are passionate: "a passion about their subject" (FG1/08/08/07); "very enthusiastic about the accounting ... isn't this the best subject!" (FG4/06/09/07) and inspirational about real

WitsETD

learning, not the superficial results for results sake: “I would measure my results WAY beyond the end of school” (FG1/08/08/07). They and the learners are actively involved in the learning process: “You can’t stand there just, for example, with a textbook and give them information. You need that interaction” (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07); “Dialogue ... debate ... they’re involved” (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07). “Quality teachers” develop thinking skills: “Think, think, brain cells must work” (Celia, Country College/15/08/07) and “encourage critical thought” (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07). They make learners believe in the importance of understanding the work and motivate them to achieve. They invest personal energy in the interactions because of their belief in their learners’ future.

Above all, “quality teachers” are self-efficacious. In their interactions in their classrooms they see themselves as agents of change, improvement and transformation: “I think essentially it’s for the betterment of the children” (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07); “You are making a change in that person’s life” (FG3/22/08/07). Christie *et al* (2007) also found that the teachers in their study took responsibility for making things happen; they did not sit back passively waiting for something to happen to them or for instructions to act and this self-agency is a strength to be cultivated: “The sense of inner agency, and mustering resources to solve problems, should be viewed as a strength in schools, and should be encouraged.” (p. 132). The teachers at “achieving schools” do see themselves in terms of “powerful images of the idealised teacher”. “Quality teachers” have the ability and need to exercise professional judgment with sensitivity and reasonableness in the best interest of their learners: “It’s me being accountable for what I do and doing it the best I can do it” (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07).

The second dimension concerns teachers’ interactions with materials and how they relate this to learners. Effective instruction is about extending knowledge and skills of learners. For this to happen teachers should have a high level of appropriate knowledge: “To be a professional you’d have to be well-prepared and you’d have to be well-informed. You can’t really be professional if you don’t know your subject” (Denny, Red River/12/09/07); “... together with the knowledge to be able to get the message through to the learners” (FG2/15/08/07); “Educators will have to be more and more knowledgeable in their own field” (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07).

Being a life-long learner is a trait of “quality teachers” and it connects with this dimension of the triad: teacher/material interaction. The teachers participate in continuing professional development: “Be a learner yourself” (FG1/08/08/07) and often in professional learning communities (discussed in chapter 5.3.1.3, p. 157 above). They mentor other teachers and are

WJSER

mentored themselves: “If you don’t like to be helped you don’t grow. You won’t be doing yourself any good” (FG3/22/08/07). When their time allows them they engage in the type of collaboration that Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) identified as the most likely to lead to significant improvement: “Fortunately I team teach with my other colleague and so ... after every art theory lesson [I ask] ‘How do you think it went? Do you think [we] could have done it like this ... or asked that question ...?’” (FG1/08/08/07). This is what Little (1990) calls “joint work” which includes: team teaching, planning, observation, action research and mentoring: “So we do confer and discuss certain things. And then we also do a post mortem. ‘Did that assignment work for you? Do you want to do it again? Did it work well for your class?’ And we share stories on what happened and ideas that you had in your class, it’s amazing” (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). It harnesses the attributes of members of “a high discretion, and high energy profession” (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 83). Glimpses of what Hargreaves (2000) calls “collegial professionalism” are seen in “quality teachers”, for example: collaboration around a common purpose and a stronger sense of “teacher efficacy” (p. 165, 166).

The third dimension that the teacher manages is the learner/material interaction. In the course of effective instruction “quality teachers” find out about what their learners know and then create the interactions that enable the learners to extend their knowledge. In this process “quality teachers” make the rationale for learning transparent: “A strength is that we are transparent” (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07); “By telling the learners the reason behind things” (FG4/06/09/07) and adapt their teaching to suit the needs, abilities and styles of their diverse learners. They are “flexible enough to recognise an opportunity to teach something that maybe you didn’t even intend for that day” and realise it is “very important for teachers not to be focused entirely on examinations” (Denny, Red River/12/09/07). “Quality teachers” understand that they can learn from their learners: “But that is what’s so nice about it they’re teaching me as well” (FG4/06/09/07), and make use of their knowledge and experiences: “They bring something from their personal history ... so there’s social capital … they contribute” (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07); “You give them situations and then they give you their context and then you’ve got to guide them into the principles” (FG4/06/09/07).

“Quality teachers” skilfully handle materials in ways that advance quality learning, for example, the curriculum and teaching resources as Cohen *et al*. (2002) explain: “The effectiveness of resources depends on their use in instruction. What students do with resources is no less consequential than the resources the schools deploy” (p. 86). They give the learners reasons for their approach to the curriculum: “It adds more value to the course and the content

WiSER

and they understand where you're coming from ... an income statement is done like this, and it's done like this internationally ... you can show them examples of all businesses" (FG1/08/08/07). "Quality teachers" make sure their learners understand the material. This involves being "on the ball" to take their learners with them: "If you write it on the board they can actually see it and know which word to associate with. A lot of that kind of interaction and the talking lets you know whether they're with you" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). They try new approaches: "I'm turning my lessons more into a transcendental exercise, which I do things the other way around. They walk in, and I'll put little labels over their necks, labelling them literally, AIDS, HIV Positive, black, whites, Indian, coloured, Moslem, all that and so on. So instead of explaining the lesson first, which is like we used to do it, I now just do the lesson. Afterwards we consolidate the information, after I've consulted them all and they feel very isolated and all that, we then bring that info … and then we find meaning later" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07). When necessary, they adjust their approach to ensure understanding: "You say, 'Oh oh, it's not going to work.' Then you must suddenly get another angle" (FG4/06/09/07).

Teachers make the content meaningful to learners by showing relevance: "Link it to the real world: So sometimes I'll start with real life situations where they can see where this Maths is going to. Before I started teaching them about the quadratic formula and the quadratic equation I took them to the fields, we used objects like a soccer ball, tennis ball, jumped over obstacles, so we were doing projectiles by throwing, kicking a soccer ball up in the air and looked at how the ball moves through the air and comes down, what kind of a shape they are able to see, can they draw the shape of the path of the ball that's taking the air? … When they moved to class, they found it easy" (Murphy, Tower Hill/17/08/07).

They begin with the learners' context and what they know: "I take their age into consideration because there is such a thing as too much information, when it comes to even substance abuse, sexuality education, I do take their age into consideration ... make it very meaningful for them … real for our context ... we have different problems" (Celia, Country College/15/08/07).

The "triad" is a useful lens to view quality and provides a specific practical framework for improving it. It focuses attention on building the capacity of teachers in the area of their work where the impact will be the greatest, that is, the interactions in the classroom. By focusing on the "triad", investment strategies focus on building teachers' capacity to perform their core function better. The evidence presented by this study suggests that improving the quality of the interactions in the classroom will enable internal and external accountability to align. This

WISER

investment with the consequent improvement in teacher professionalism respects and strengthens teachers' professional identity thereby improving their morale by, for example, increasing their confidence and the "psychic rewards" of the profession (see claim 1 in chapter 6.2.1, p. 169 above).

6.2.3 Claim 3 - Teacher regulation is necessary for quality improvement, but it requires conditions that recognise the value of teacher leadership

In chapter 4.2, p. 130, I explain what the teachers in the study believe the balance between autonomy and control should be: what they believe does and does not enable them to improve the quality of learning. In chapter 4.1.3, p. 120, and chapter 5.2, p. 146, I describe how the teachers experience regulation which is not meaningful for quality improvement, and using their critique I construct their ideal form of regulation. In doing this I bear in mind Elmore's (2004) emphasis that: "Internal accountability precedes external accountability and is a precondition for any process of improvement" (p. 114) and that the purpose of an accountability system is to focus the resources and capacities of an organisation to a particular end (*ibid*: 117).

In the view of the teachers in the study three scenarios are possible:

- When/if all role players in the education process play their part and when/if teachers are able to exercise professional judgment, and are given the scope and guidance to do so, then, autonomy and accountability are aligned. This also means that internal and external accountability are aligned.
- When/if the role players do not play their part and when/if teachers feel that they have lost their ability to make professional judgments, then autonomy is less than accountability. Teachers experience accountability as in opposition to autonomy which Gutman (1987) terms "ossification of office" (in Wits EPU, 2005: 10). Internal and external accountability are not aligned.
- When/if the role players do not play their part and when/if teachers feel that they can do what they want, then autonomy is greater than accountability. Gutman (1987) terms this "insolence of office" (*ibid*: 10). Internal and external accountability are not aligned.

Currently the teachers in "achieving schools" experience the second scenario described above. In chapter 4 I describe the impact on their professionalism and identity of the bureaucratic measures imposed to ensure accountability. Teachers appeal for time and effort to be directed towards meaningful activities aimed at improving the quality of learning and not to be

WitsETD

consumed by meaningless tasks aimed at satisfying bureaucratic accountability demands: "For me they're focusing on the admin, the petty, and not on the quality teacher" (FG4/06/09/07). Teachers report work overload and intensification as a result of the demands made on them. I highlight three examples of the consequences of this. Firstly, the teachers argue that worthwhile professional practices such as, for example, reflection, which contribute towards improving the quality of their work get neglected for more urgent but less important matters: "I'm so busy doing the red tape that I don't give myself time to think about the next lesson" (FG4/06/09/07). Secondly, the teachers claim to have less time to strengthen their relationships with learners which as discussed in chapter 6.2, p. 168 above, is important for effective interaction in the triad: "If somebody comes in I think, 'Oh dear, I must finish completing this, now this child [needs my attention].' I'm really putting the children off just to get my paper work done" (FG4/06/09/07).

Thirdly, the intensification of teachers' work that is associated with the multiple roles that teachers are expected to play and the growing administrative requirements of assessment recording and reporting, de-professionalise teachers and make them feel de-skilled: "The teachers are saying, 'I don't know what I am doing any more'" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07). Teachers feel less able to fulfil their primary role which is to deliver the quality learning outcomes expected of them; they lose their confidence in their ability to exercise professional judgment. Under these circumstances their interactions in the triad are compromised and their capacity questioned.

The teachers in the study show that they, like the teachers in the Christie *et al.* (2007) study, also go "beyond any call of duty" (p. 105) and "stretched themselves almost beyond their limits in their commitment to achieve success" (p. 116). This is, however, not sustainable as overload and over-extension of personal and professional capacity will eventually lead to burnout as the drawings and descriptions of teachers' "fragile identity" indicate (see chapter 4.1, p. 103). A requirement for re-professionalising teaching is to ensure that teachers' work is focused on the delivery of quality education and is not compromised by a multiplicity of conflicting and additional duties.

The teachers in "achieving schools" believe they need the first scenario to deliver quality. They want regulation but it must recognise their professionalism.

The teachers believe the culture and climate of professionalism will support their work. They believe that a school that promotes quality learning and achievement in a disciplined

WitsETD

atmosphere promotes teachers' drive: "The school vision ... It inspires" (FG1/08/08/07); "When I think, the first thing [that comes to mind] about this school [is that it is] academic-driven ... The second one that would come to mind is that generally this is a safe and friendly school. ... I think it's got a lot to do with the fact that the teachers generally are more relaxed and more friendly. We haven't got this terrible screaming, shouting atmosphere at this school" (Denny, Red River/12/09/07). Colleagues support one another in their efforts to improve quality either through formal mentoring: "It [mentoring] is part of my job!" (FG4/06/09/07); "I've had wonderful mentors … with ideas, help, support *et cetera*" (FG2/15/08/07); professional development sessions: "In our department we do development"(FG3/22/08/07); or sharing good practice: "We share the work ... showing that each person is producing work of high enough quality to be regarded as a professional" (FG1/08/08/07). They motivate one another: "I think watching others not in your department … delivering quality and having exciting ideas and I think it is catchy and if you're so passionate about it you're kind of wanting to do the same in your field" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07) and reflect together: "How do you think it went?" (FG1/08/08/07). They recognise that this type of culture needs to be developed: "So I do think a culture ... where you can share philosophies, which we do here [needs to be developed], because it's not always at schools, and you as a person also need to be open for that" (FG4/06/09/07).

The importance of a culture that is conducive to quality learning is recognised in international research. It highlights the fact that mandated change, even when it is positive, often fails when the culture and context of schools where it is to be implemented are ignored (Motala, 2001: 63). Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) urge that attention needs to be given to the teacher and the school in totality (p. 50) (see chapter 2.3.2, p. 64).

The teachers require the external role players such as the NDE and the GDE to fulfil their obligation in terms of their notion of the contractual relationship. The external layers are also accountable to provide what is necessary to enable internal accountability and external accountability to align, and consequently to enable quality improvement. The teachers believe the NDE can do this by providing clear curriculum, assessment, and accountability policies that give direction, are reasonable in terms of demands, are realistically implementable in the current South African context, and limit administrative and prescriptive requirements to what contributes towards improving the quality of education. They expect the NDE to provide clarity in the curriculum policy by specifying the content (in detail): "actually prescribe content" (FG2/15/08/07); and stating what learners must know: "Mine is very specific, it says they must know that, that and that" (FG2/15/08/07). Teachers want a quality curriculum:

WiSETD

"What they've done is brilliant, they've introduced a lot more modern stuff" (FG2/15/08/07) of an appropriate length: "not rush through the syllabus" (FG4/06/09/07).

In performing its role the GDE officials need to relate in a collegial manner with teachers who are their partners in the realisation of the education department's goal of improving quality and "not in a threatening, judgmental manner ... on a witch hunt to see what I am not doing" (Albert, Deep Valley/17/09/07). District facilitators should help you "be comfortable or reassured ... ensuring that you know what you are doing" (Loren, Blue Lake/13/08/07).

The teachers believe that the community, and especially the parents, need to take seriously their obligation as partners in the process of educating their children. The support, involvement and respect of parents for the work of teachers can significantly assist teachers in their delivery of quality education. A teacher attributes her school's success to parental involvement: "I think there's one reason why our school is such a success, because of the support of the parents" (FG4/06/09/07).

An essential quality that links all the role players, those external to the classroom and those inside it, is trust. For the parties to be effective each needs to trust the other to do its job in a manner that enables quality education to take place. Teachers need to trust that the other role players will meet their obligations to enable them to do their work. The components of the "nest of systems" must trust the teachers to get on with doing the work in the "nest": "The government doesn't think that we are doing that [doing quality teaching] that's why they come and say they want to implement the IQMS thing" (FG3/22/08/07).

Teachers require support and appropriate regulation that respect their professionalism and professional judgment. They require a balance between autonomy and control which occurs when teachers understand and support the rationale for controls that restrain autonomy. In Elmore's (2004) terms, the purpose of accountability is to focus the resources and the capacities of an organisation (the school and its teachers) towards a particular end (quality learning outcomes). Following from Cohen and Ball's (1999) notion of the "triad", a more effective model of regulating teachers and their work recognises, respects, and strengthens the professionalism of teachers.

WitsETD

6.3 WHAT TEACHERS IN "ACHIEVING SCHOOLS" BELIEVE ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN APPROPRIATE MODEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The findings of this study show that teachers in "achieving schools" want regulation but require a model of accountability that:

- preserves, protects and defends their professional identity (chapter 4.1.2, p. 115);
- observes the delicate balance between autonomy and control/compliance with external demands (chapter 4.2.3, p. 140);
- encourages the development and strengthening of meaningful/enabling factors and limits the meaningless ones (chapter 5, p. 144); and
- recognises the importance of developing teachers' capacity and internal accountability (chapter 6.2, p. 168).

6.3.1 A teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement

These findings show that to secure teachers' commitment to quality improvement a model of accountability that observes a balance between autonomy and control and that empowers and respects teachers' professional judgment is needed. It depends on the capacity of teachers and on the internal accountability of the school, and emphasises and strengthens their professional qualities, specifically their instructional capacity as Cohen and Ball (1999) understand it (see chapter 6.2.2, p. 175). I refer to this as a teacher-centred model of quality improvement. The question, of course, is how a teacher-centred model will avoid the negative effects of the current controlling regulatory conditions on teachers' sense of professionalism. The idea of a teacher-centred model concurs with researchers' views of the centrality of teachers in the quest for quality improvement, discussed in some detail in chapter 2.3, p. 62 above (Coleman, 1966; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Carnoy, 1999; Goodson *et al*, 2006; Hargreaves and Goodson, 2006; and others). The model can be represented diagrammatically in the following way:

WISETD

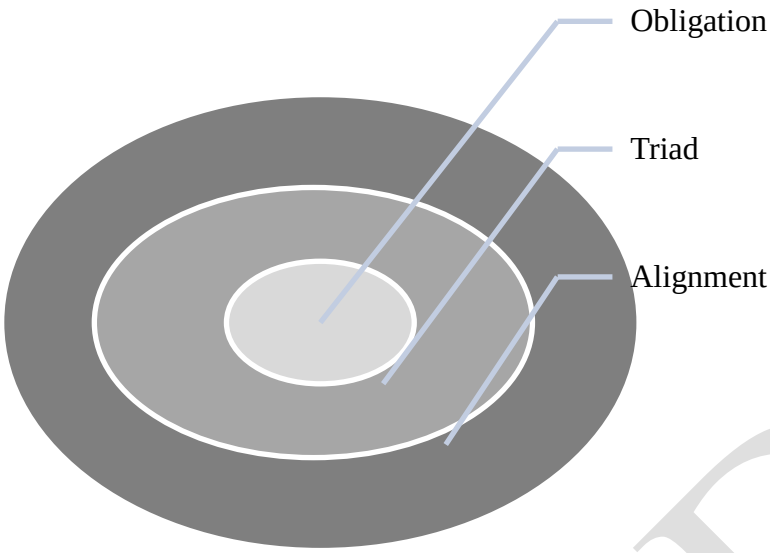

Figure 4 – Elements of a teacher-centred model of quality improvement

At the heart of a teacher-centred model is the notion of "mutual obligation" described by Winch (1996) (see chapter 6.2.2, p. 175). Briefly expressed, the education sector, including education officials, teachers and learners have an obligation to deliver an envisaged product in exchange for civil society's financial investment in them. What is envisaged is, of course, "quality" education as it is variously understood and which I discussed in chapter 2.1, p. 20. All role players have to fulfil their role to achieve this and, for this reason, regulatory controls to ensure that the obligation is being met are necessary and important. The teachers in the study understand their obligation as being a form of contract between them, at the level of their classroom and the school, and the role players external to them who construct (NDE), monitor (GDE) and mediate (the school) the regulatory controls. Teachers are committed to fulfilling their responsibilities but require a reciprocal commitment from the external players. Elmore (2002b) refers to this as "reciprocity of accountability for capacity" (Elmore, 2002b: 3).

Investment in teachers' capacity needs to devise investment strategies that focus on the triad or on teachers' instructional capacity, the middle layer of the model (see chapter 6.2.2, p. 175). Briefly expressed a teacher-centred model would invest in teachers' knowledge (refer to chapter 2.3.1, p. 63), recognise teachers as a "total teacher" (chapter 2.3.2, p. 64), re-organise teachers' work from isolation to collaboration (chapter 2.3.3, p. 65), establish opportunities for mentoring of teachers (chapter 2.3.4, p. 67), and secure teachers' commitment to change (chapter 2.3.5, p. 68). How teachers at "achieving schools" believe quality is operationalised in the triad adds to an understanding of the model (see chapter 6.2.2, p. 175).

WitsETD

Muller and Roberts (2000) speak of teachers' being in "an embedded nest of systems" (p. 2) and Darling-Hammond (2008) in "Creating Excellent *and* Equitable Schools" recognises that teachers' ability to deliver quality is constrained by the organisational structure (the nest) in which they function (p. 14). Like Elmore and others, she argues for a model of accountability that focuses on building teacher capacity along with school capacity (internal accountability) so that the teacher is able to meet the demands of external accountability. She acknowledges that the "ongoing tug-of-war between bureaucratic control and autonomy cannot ultimately be resolved without investment in school capacity and [teachers'] professional knowledge and skill" (p. 19). This brings me to the third layer of the teacher-centred model, which is "alignment". This layer refers to the institutional conditions of the model. To use Darling-Hammond's view, the success of the schools lies in: the preparation and development of teachers to enable them to use new kinds of instructional practices (the teacher in the classroom - the centre of the nest), developing principals' skills in instructional leadership and organisational design (school level - the next layer in the nest), "a system of curriculum, assessment, and instruction that encourages the development of 21st-century skills", and funding to support the necessary interventions (the NDE and GDE level - the outer layers of the nest) (2008: 20).

To sum up, the teachers identify the following factors as enablers of alignment: support in the form of capacity-building (the school, GDE and NDE), clear and reasonable policies (the NDE) (chapter 5.2.1, p. 146), effective partnerships and resource provision (all role players in the educational environment) (chapter 5.3.1.1 -5.3.1.2, pp. 155, 156), and a school culture and climate that is conducive to quality education delivery (the school) (chapter 5.3.1.3, p. 157). If the teacher at the centre experiences all these enabling factors internal and external accountability would be aligned and teachers would experience an enabling balance between autonomy and control.

Conceptually, the teacher-centred model contains three conditions:

1. moral foundation ("obligation");
2. focus of investment ("Triad" or "instructional capacity"); and
3. institutional alignment (between internal and external accountability).

WitsETD

6.3.2 Conceptions of professionalism corresponding to a teacher-centred model of accountability

In a teacher-centred model of accountability the focus is on teachers "*being professional*" and "*practising professionalism*". In Chapter 4 what teachers in the study say about their experiences and beliefs demonstrates an understanding of what "being professional" entails. So what notion of professionalism best supports a teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement?

Three conceptions can be identified. Firstly, "democratic professionalism" (Whitty, 2006: 14; Sachs, 1999: 7) and an "activist identity" (Sachs, 1999: 7) are particularly suitable for South Africa at present. "Democratic professionalism" is "rooted in principles of equity and social justice" (Sachs, 1999: 7) and is suited to accomplishing quality improvement because of its transformative influence (Whitty, 2006: 14). This conception of professionalism relies on the assumption that teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable and therefore able to exercise professional judgment (Wits EPU, 2005: 8). They have capacity/"internalised professionalism"[142]. Democratic professionalism seeks to "improve the nature of teachers' work and to entrench teacher autonomy" (*ibid*: 8) and to build alliances between teachers and other members of the school workforce, external stakeholders, community, parents, and learners (Whitty, 2006: 14). It encourages a collaborative culture where the teacher's responsibility extends beyond his or her own classroom to other learners, schools, colleagues and the broader profession.

The activist identity that goes with this enables teachers to see themselves as agents of change, proactive in bringing about improvement rather than helpless victims of constant new reform strategies (Sachs, 1999: 7). This, I argue, will restore and strengthen the teachers' fragile professional identity. An activist identity includes the following characteristics:

- Autonomy based on knowledge and accountability for actions
- Commitment to improving achievement of all learners
- Modelling the right way every day

Secondly, similar to democratic professionalism is the conception of "interactive professionalism" (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 3, 4). In response to the accountability demands placed on teachers and in the context of these demands, Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) have developed the notion of interactive professionalism to describe a set of practices, beliefs

[142] Calhoun and Joyce, 1998.

WitsETD

and conditions which they believe teachers should develop in order to bring about significant improvements in schools and gains in learner achievement. In interactive professionalism the following prevails:

- Teachers are committed to norms of continuous improvements in their school.
- Teachers as a group are allowed greater powers of discretion in making decisions with and of behalf of the children they know best. Joint teacher decisions extend beyond sharing of resources, ideas and other immediate practicalities to critical reflection on the purpose and value of what teachers teach and how.
- Teachers make these decisions with their colleagues in collaborative cultures of help and support. Teachers are more fundamentally accountable as they open their classroom doors and engage in dialogue, action and assessment of their work with other adults inside and outside their schools (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 3, 4).

A third conception is Goodson and Hargreaves's (1996) preferred version of "postmodern professionalism" which is similar to Fullan and Hargreaves's (1992) "interactive professionalism". It identifies seven principles of postmodern professionalism: subject knowledge, technical competence, maximising teachers' "discretionary judgment", embracing "moral and social purposes", forging "cultures of collaboration and self-directed continuous improvement", embodying "heteronomy, complexity and commitment to care" (p. 21).

A conception of professionalism that secures teachers' commitment to deliver quality education is needed for a model of quality improvement that is teacher-centred to succeed. The three conceptions described above are suitable because of their focus on the characteristics, qualities and actions of teachers that constitute their instructional capacity. The likelihood of quality improvement is greater because of teachers' increased professionalism and greater internal accountability in their schools thus enabling them to meet external accountability demands aimed at quality improvement.

6.3.3 How a teacher-centred model of quality improvement differs from other approaches to quality improvement and corresponding accountability modes

In chapter 2.1.6 I described and compared school reform approaches and critiqued them for their suitability for quality improvement. The teacher-centred approach to quality improvement which emerges from this study attempts to address the deficiencies of previous approaches.

Firstly, the teacher-centred approach measures quality in terms of learner achievement in a broad sense and is not limited to: performance on tests (merged paradigm approach); success of

WitsETD

a particular self-chosen, narrowly-focused improvement strategy (inside-out approach); or compliance and efficiency in response to managerial instructions (outside-in approach). Secondly, the teacher is regarded as the crucial factor and is central to quality improvement and therefore worth investing in. This is similar to the inside-out approach but is very different from the outside-in approach that considers teachers as deficient, and from the merged paradigm that expects teacher capacity to appear miraculously in response mainly to incentives and sanctions. Thirdly, a teacher-centred model of quality improvement focuses strategies on building teacher capacity to improve what happens in the classroom by focusing on the triad: the interactions between teachers, learners and materials. The outside-in approach focuses on inputs, not on actual classroom interaction but on more general aspects, for example, textbooks. The inside-out approach focuses on strategies that teachers and schools believe would improve quality, some of which concern what happens in the classroom. The merged paradigm is concerned with setting standards then exerting pressure on teachers to achieve them, sometimes with capacity-building but usually this is not enough. Fourthly, autonomy and control in the teacher-centred approach are finely balanced and the teachers' professionalism is respected. The teachers believe that regulation is necessary but not to the extent that their professional judgment is meaninglessly constrained. They support regulation that is meaningful. The teachers are enabled to deliver quality when there is this balance. In the case of the outside-in and inside-out approaches there is no balance. In the former control exceeds autonomy and in the latter case autonomy is greater than accountability. In the case of the merged paradigm the ideal is a balance but teachers experience more control as pressure mounts on them and they experience de-professionalisation.

The advantages of a teacher-centred model of quality improvement over the other approaches include:

- Teachers recognise their obligation to deliver quality and adopt and develop an understanding of professionalism to accomplish this.
- The centrality of teachers in any quality improvement approach is acknowledged. Teachers' professionalism is respected and strengthened. Teachers exercise leadership and view themselves as agents of quality improvement.
- Capacity-building focuses on instructional capacity and the interactions in the classroom to ensure this happens.

WitsETD

- The delicate balance between autonomy and control that teachers believe enables them to deliver quality is achieved through alignment between internal and external accountability.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the beliefs and experiences of teachers in achieving schools described in chapters 4 and 5 leads to the conclusion that the best way to obtain quality improvement is to focus on teachers' instructional capacity. These findings confirm researchers' claims that teachers are central to the success of quality improvement reforms (Coleman, 1966; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Carnoy, 1999; Goodson *et al.*, 2006; Goodson and Hargreaves, 2006; Fullan, 2001). For this reason it is necessary to take notice of what teachers in "achieving schools" say about what they believe contributes to quality improvement and the forms of accountability and teacher regulation aimed at ensuring quality.

What emerges regarding teacher regulation is that teachers believe that there must be a balance between autonomy and control. Too much control undermines their sense of professionalism and alienates them, resulting in mere compliance and lack of commitment towards quality improvement initiatives or, at the other extreme, work intensification and burnout in the scramble to do everything required. Too little control creates the potential for chaos and incoherence in the system and absence of accountability for the quality of teachers' work; everything depends on the level of professionalism and of the individual teacher. Under both these conditions quality across the education system is not achievable. A balance between autonomy and control is, however, only possible when the capacity of teachers, their level of internalised professionalism/internal accountability, is such that they can meet external accountability demands, that is when internal accountability and external accountability are aligned.

The chapter concludes by proposing a teacher-centred accountability model as a means to attain this alignment and thereby quality improvement. This is a model of accountability that respects and strengthens the professionalism of teachers. Three conceptions of professionalism which correspond to a teacher-centred model of accountability are identified. They focus on, amongst other things, teachers' commitment to quality improvement, collaboration, and development of knowledge.

WitsETD

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the opinion of researchers and the experience of teachers in this study the focus of many quality improvement reforms has been on the wrong things. The forms of teacher regulation/accountability modes and type of professionalism that these gave rise to have not yielded quality improvement but have left teachers feeling that their professionalism is under attack. Carnoy (1999) argues that, in order to implement wise educational interventions that can make both access and quality improvements, education planners should heed the "four guideposts" that he identifies (pp. 82-86). Briefly expressed, the essentials to be considered by planners include: increasing education spending, ensuring access to quality education for all, administrative efficiency and honesty and commitment to the understanding that teachers remain fundamental to the delivery of quality education and the necessary support and development this understanding entails. For transformation (from a system delivering poor quality to one that delivers quality) to take place the focus needs to be on substance rather than form and structure: Carnoy claims that the "quality of teaching and teacher effort" is fundamental to quality education" (1999: 83). This study focuses particularly on this claim and the implications for a model of quality improvement that it gives rise to.

Quality improvement initiatives must consider teachers in their context (Muller and Roberts's (2000) "nest of systems") and provide the support for them to do their work before they can be expected to solve the problems of quality as they cannot do it alone. Embedded in the nest of contractual obligations, if teachers do not have capacity and the other layers of the nest do not support the teacher, neither the teacher nor the school can improve quality regardless of the amount of pressure placed on them. The literature and experiences of the teachers in "achieving schools" highlight the need for there to be teacher and school capacity (internal accountability) in order to respond to external accountability demands. For quality improvement a model of accountability that is teacher-centred is needed along with a conception of professionalism that respects teachers' professionalism and secures their commitment to quality improvement without overburdening them and exploiting them.

This study concludes by identifying implications for the role players of a teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement and making recommendations. I am mindful that the study focused on teachers in "achieving schools" and how they experience their professionalism and what they believe contributes towards quality improvement and therefore some of what the teachers identify as enabling might not be generalisable to all types of schools. I acknowledge Hopkins *et al*'s. (1997) claim that a "one size fits all" approach to

WISEED

quality improvement is not appropriate. Some of what this study proposes as a means of improving quality may be more appropriate to teachers in Type 3[143] and Type 2[144] schools but much is generalisable to all teachers, even those requiring Type I strategies[145], particularly the principles that are identified. How the specifics are enacted would need to be individualised.

7.1 IMPLICATIONS

A teacher-centred model of quality improvement and accountability has the following implications:

- The teacher is the focus of strategies aimed at quality improvement, therefore, quality assurance interventions must focus on the primary work of the teacher, namely teaching and learning activities in the classroom (chapter 6.1.1, p. 167; 6.2.2, p. 178; and 6.3.2, p. 190).
- It must be recognised that the teacher works "in an embedded nest of systems" (Muller and Roberts, 2000), therefore the other parts of the system, the organisation in which the teacher works, (the NDE, GDE, and school) must play their part to support the work of the teacher in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2004 and 2008) (chapter 5.3, p. 15 and 6.2.3, p. 184).
- Teachers' internal capacity/professionalism needs to be aligned with external accountability demands. To the extent that there is alignment, the teacher will experience a balance between autonomy and control that respects her/his professionalism (chapter 6.2.2, p. 178).
- A teacher-centred model of accountability depends on a conception professionalism that recognises that teachers are responsible for developing their professional capacity in an on-going and collaborative manner. De-professionalising forces must be recognised and eliminated (chapter 4.1.3, p. 120; 5.2.2, p. 147; and 5.3.2, p. 159).

7.2 POLICY-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section I recommend some steps to be taken to give effect to a teacher-centred model of quality improvement and accountability. These recommendations are based on research findings discussed in the literature review and the beliefs and experiences of the teachers in my

[143] The "good or effective school" (Hopkins *et al.*, 1997: 408, 409). See footnote 99.
[144] A "low achieving school" (Hopkins *et al*., 1997: 406-408). See footnote 98.
[145] A "failing school; a stuck school" (Hopkins *et al*., 1997: 404-406). See footnote 97.

WitsETD

study. I begin with those in the teachers' external environment and then move to factors internal to the teachers.

- Review the policies of the NDE that impact directly on teachers' daily work, such as curriculum, assessment and regulation of learner discipline, to eliminate aspects of uncertainty, complexity and unreasonableness that hinder teachers in their work.
- At the PDE level (GDE and districts) provide expert support for teachers, particularly relating to curriculum and assessment interpretation and implementation. Focus the attention of the GDE and its district officials on in-service professional development that builds teachers' instructional capacity.
- Ensure that schools are organised and operate in a manner that supports the primary work of teachers in the classroom. Create opportunities for collaboration, joint work, mentoring, relevant professional development and development of "total teachers" (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 50). Develop a culture of teaching and learning and high quality expectations where parents, learners and staff work in partnership.
- Promote a conception of professionalism that requires teachers to take individual responsibility for developing their personal and professional qualities and abilities. Emphasise the strengthening of their instructional capacity so that they will able to meet external accountability demands.
- At all levels replace bureaucratic accountability measures that do not contribute towards quality improvement with forms of control that make educational sense to teachers and are concerned with helping them improve the quality of the substance of their work.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although the generalisability of the findings and conclusions of my study is limited because of the small size of the sample and its focus on teachers in "achieving (secondary) schools", I am, nevertheless, able to identify worthwhile areas for further research which will deepen and extend this study. This study also prompts additional related research questions. To increase the value of this study, I believe it would be useful to deepen the understanding of certain ideas and concepts that emerge from the study by testing them on a larger sample of teachers, a different sample of teachers, and even other stakeholders.

I believe it would be useful to apply similar research questions to those I used in this study of teachers in "achieving schools" to teachers in a radically different type of school. I would propose again using non-probability sampling of the purposive type. The sample would not be

WitsETD

very large and the methodology could be similar to that used in my study. I would select schools that are attended by low SES learners, are under-resourced and under-performing but not so dysfunctional that it would be difficult to learn anything from them and where quality improvement strategies would be almost impossible to implement. These schools would be what Christie *et al*. (2007) call "the mainstream" schools in South Africa. The schools would fit Hopkins *et al*.'s (1997) descriptors of Type II schools. The study would explore teachers' experiences and conceptions of quality to see what form of a teacher-centred model of teacher regulation and quality improvement would be applicable. Particular focus would be on the teachers' current understanding of professionalism and the extent to which it corresponds with new forms of professionalism (democratic, interactive and postmodern – see chapter 6.3.2, p. 190) that are needed for a teacher-centred model of teacher regulation. What are the characteristics and principles of these forms of professionalism and teacher identity and what is necessary for teachers to develop these characteristics and commit to these principles?

To extend my research I believe it would be worthwhile to apply similar research questions to those of my study to a large and random sample of teachers in all types of schools. Because of the size of the sample I would use a different methodology, including a survey. This study would be similar to Chisholm *et al*.'s (2005) study on Educator Workload. My focus would not be primarily on workload but it would address issues related to teacher morale that arise because of the accountability/autonomy relation resulting from the mode of teacher regulation. Using this larger sample of teachers I would seek to understand the three elements of a teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement: what do the teachers believe constitutes "mutual obligation", what do they believe a "focus on the triad" may entail and what do they believe will enable "alignment of internal and external accountability". In this study I would also explore how teachers' current conceptions of professionalism and professional identity differ from the new forms of professionalism and what consequently would have to change for teachers to adopt these new forms of professionalism that are necessary for the effectiveness of a teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement. Through this study I would hope to present a complete picture of a context that is conducive for quality education delivery and improvement, one where teachers' professionalism is respected and consequently teacher morale is high.

In order to understand further one of the constructs that emerged from my analysis of teachers' experiences another relatively small case study would be helpful. In the context of the complaints from teachers about ineffectual training provided by the education department and the lack of support from district officials who focus on the form not the substance, I would

WiSER

seek to understand what actually constitutes Cohen and Ball's (1999) "instructional capacity" (the triad) and the implication this has for teacher professional development. Research should focus on what investment in "instructional capacity" entails for teachers and for those concerned with teachers' professional development. The research should address questions such as: What must teacher professional development focus on to improve teaching and learning in the classroom? This study could include exploring the potential for cluster meetings, currently used by the provincial districts mainly as a bureaucratic regulatory tool, to be transformed into professional learning communities that provide support for teachers and extend teachers' professionalism so that the quality and effectiveness of the interactions in the triad improve. The necessary pre-conditions for this model would have to be identified. The sample of schools would be purposively selected to include teachers who are similar to those in the original study as well as those who are different. The unit of analysis would be different in that teachers' classroom practices, including their interactions with learners, would be studied as well as their beliefs and experiences.

This study and the aspects for further research discussed above have been restricted to the teachers' point of view. I think it would therefore be useful to extend the case study to other stakeholders at these schools in the sample, for example: the learners and the district officials/subject facilitators responsible for supporting teachers' classroom activities. The study could discover the learners' viewpoint by exploring their experiences of the interactions in the classroom and the practices of their teachers. What do they believe contributes to effective learning? What do learners believe contributes to effective instructional capacity? Similarly, the beliefs and experiences of district subject facilitators and cluster leaders about their roles in quality improvement and what they actually do could determine the extent that these stakeholders contribute meaningfully to quality improvement or how they increase the bureaucratic and regulatory demands made on teachers.

The findings and conclusions of my study raise questions for research related to the policy implications of a teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement. Research would be helpful in order firstly to identify what teachers need in the policy framework and secondly to identify how the policy could best be implemented in order to achieve quality improvement. A teacher-centred model of accountability and quality improvement places emphasis on teacher professional development. The policy on which I would therefore like to focus research is the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in

WiSETD

South Africa,[146] How can the requirements of this policy which envisages teachers pursuing in-service professional development by means of a continuing professional teacher development system (CPTD system) involving the accumulation of points over a three year cycle, be harnessed to ensure that teacher professional development focuses on what contributes to quality improvement, specifically what happens in the triad.

A second focus of this research could examine the implications of the policy. Participation in CPTD, professional learning communities and activities associated with new forms of professionalism require a considerable investment of teachers' time and energy in the context of a profession that already feels overburdened by an unreasonable workload and the expectation that its members should fulfil multiple roles. How can these strategies for improvement that require additional time and effort from teachers be implemented under the current conditions? What would need to change in order to make implementation possible?

My research journey discovered a teaching profession with battered morale, wavering confidence and a fragile, unstable professional identity. The aspects identified above for further research focus on discovering what can be done to restore teacher morale, identity and professionalism.

WitsETD

[146] Enacted in terms of the National Education Policy Act (27/1996), in G.N. 29832, 26 April 2007, sections 52-69.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A Permission letter from the GDE

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APPENDIX 1B Letter to SGB/ District Director/ Principal

(SGB letter provided here)

42 Kildare Avenue
PARKVIEW
2193
……February 2007

The Chairperson
School Governing Body
……High School
……
……

Dear ……..

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a Master's student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. To fulfil the requirements for the degree I have chosen the topic "Professionalism behind the school doors?" as my research topic. The study seeks to explore the practices and beliefs of quality (effective) teachers in order to find out what quality teachers do in their classrooms and why they choose to do these things. I plan to explore three main issues: quality teaching and learning practices and beliefs; teacher accountability and teacher professionalism. In the classroom I will be observing classroom climate teacher and learner discourse and the use of formative assessment in particular. The Gauteng Department of Education has approved the study (see attached approval letter).

The study was motivated by my frustration with the amount of administrative work required of principals and teachers by education officials that sought to ensure that the school and the teachers were doing their work. I refer particularly to the various quality assurance measures: forms, quarterly/monthly reports to the IDSO, CASS progress reports, internal and external whole school evaluation processes, annual school improvement plans and more recently the IQMS teacher performance appraisal process. These requirements were often motivated by the need to raise the quality of teaching and learning and, in the case of high schools, to ensure that the grade 12 curriculum was being completed in order to achieve a respectable and better pass rate than the previous year. I had a sense that much of this administrative work was being completed superficially merely in order to comply and was regarded in many effective schools as contributing to the increased workload of teachers, an unnecessary interference and an interruption of the genuine work of the school. This from of control by the education authorities may be termed bureaucratic accountability. In my study I want to explore what motivates the quality educator and to what extent he or she delivers a quality teaching and learning product because he or she seeks to be professional in his or her approach to the work or to please the education officials by complying with their demands. More detail is given in the information sheet attached.

I am seeking the participation of your school because it was one of the five schools selected for the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance research on Leadership Styles and Practices in Effective Schools (Roberts and Roach 2006). I believe my study could be a companion study in that it would research the practices and beliefs of quality (effective) teachers in effective schools.

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For my study I request the participation of the following participants from your school. The requirements of each participant are briefly stated below.

I require two teachers who are identified by you or/and the SMT as "quality" effective teachers. They would be teachers who deliver quality education to your learners, whose results are consistently very good considering the potential of the learners. These teachers will be interviewed (approximately one and a half hours each) on the school premises. These teachers along with teachers from each of the other identified schools will form the case study.

I also require four to eight articulate and insightful teachers for a discussion group (focus group). Teachers with alternative or difficult opinions would also be interesting. The discussion would be conducted on the school premises after teaching time for approximately one to one and a half hours. Participants would be asked questions relating to teacher professionalism and their perceptions and experience of quality teachers. The data gathered from this focus group will also supplement the case study.

While the interviews will be audio- taped the identity of the school and all the participants will remain confidential. I will be transcribing the tapes and identifying participants using pseudonyms. I should like to commence the study in July or as soon as possible thereafter.

My contact details are as follows:

School telephone number:	011 646 5423
Home telephone number:	011 646 6579
Mobile telephone number:	082 610 5756
Facsimile number:	011 486 1828
e-mail address:	cereseto@parktowngirls.co.za

Please feel free to discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

I eagerly anticipate your participation and look forward to a productive relationship with you and members of your school community in the interest of education in our country.

Yours sincerely

ANTHEA CERESETO (MRS)

WitsETD

APPENDIX 1C Letter to teacher participants in individual/focus group interviews

(Letter to individual teachers provided here)

42 Kildare Avenue
PARKVIEW
2193
……February 2007

Ms……
……High School
……
……

Dear ……..

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a Master's student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. To fulfil the requirements for the degree I have chosen the topic "Compliance or professionalism behind the school doors?" as my research topic. The study seeks to explore the practices and beliefs of quality (effective) teachers in order to find out what quality teachers do in their classrooms and why they choose to do these things. I plan to explore three main issues: quality teaching and learning practices and beliefs; teacher accountability and teacher professionalism.

The study was motivated by my frustration with the amount of administrative work required of principals and teachers by education officials that sought to ensure that the school and the teachers were doing their work. I refer particularly to the various quality assurance measures: forms, quarterly/monthly reports to the IDSO, CASS progress reports, internal and external whole school evaluation processes, annual school improvement plans and more recently the IQMS teacher performance appraisal process. These requirements were often motivated by the need to raise the quality of teaching and learning and, in the case of high schools, to ensure that the grade 12 curriculum was being completed in order to achieve a respectable and better pass rate than the previous year. I had a sense that much of this administrative work was being completed superficially merely in order to comply and was regarded in many effective schools as contributing to the increased workload of teachers, an unnecessary interference and an interruption of the genuine work of the school. This from of control by the education authorities may be termed bureaucratic accountability. In my study I want to explore what motivates the quality educator and to what extent he or she delivers a quality teaching and learning product because he or she seeks to be professional in his or her approach to the work or to please the education officials by complying with their demands. More detail is given in the information sheet attached.

I am seeking your participation because your school ……. was one of the five schools selected for the Matthew Goniwe research on Leadership Styles and Practices in Effective Schools and you have been identified as quality (effective) teacher in your school. I believe my study could be a companion study in that it would research the practices and beliefs of quality (effective) teachers in effective schools.

The study will entail one teacher from five schools (you are the proposed person from your school) participating in an in-depth interview which would take about one to one and a half

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hours after school hours. You would not be expected to do any special preparation. I wish to record what your beliefs and experiences about your work.

Other teachers from your school would be involved in a focus group to discuss the same questions. The purpose of the focus groups is to provide supplementary information.

While the interviews will be audio- taped your identity and that of the school and all the participants will remain confidential. I will be transcribing the tapes and identifying participants using pseudonyms.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would consent to participate in the study. As I should like to commence the study in The third term please could you complete the consent form attached and fax it back to the number given below as soon as possible. Please retain the original so that I may collect it from you when I meet you.

My contact details are as follows:

Work telephone number:	011 646 5423
Home telephone number:	011 646 6579
Mobile telephone number:	082 610 5756
Facsimile number:	011 486 1828

I will be contacting you within the next few days to answer any questions that you might have concerning your participation in this study. At that time we can arrange a meeting to discuss the details of the interview for the study. In the meanwhile please feel free to telephone me to discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

I eagerly anticipate your participation and look forward to a productive relationship with you and members of your school community in the interest of education in our country.

Yours sincerely

ANTHEA CERESETO (MRS)

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APPENDIX 1D Information sheet for research participant

(Individual participant's version provided here)

The research project entitled **"Professionalism behind the school doors?"** seeks to explore the practices and beliefs of quality (effective) teachers. The study seeks to explore three main issues.

It aims to understand what teachers understand by the concept of "quality". This is important as there can be no improvement in teaching quality if there is no understanding of what quality actually is and how it is manifested and attained.

It also seeks to discover why teachers choose to do the things they do and what their personal beliefs are with regard to their responsibilities. What compels teachers to select certain actions and hold particular beliefs? Do teachers always do what they are told to do by education department officials or official policy or do they select only some things? On what basis do they make their decisions? In other words, are teachers complying (with reluctance, realistic acceptance or willingly because they believe in the value of the requirements)? Or have teachers made a selection on the basis on what they believe is sound educationally and from a professional standpoint. Are the teachers being externally controlled or professionally motivated? What makes quality teachers conduct their work in a manner that is accountable?

Teachers are frequently exhorted to be "professional" and practise "professionalism" but once again the expressions do not have a common interpretation. The study will attempt to discover an understanding of the term "professionalism" and how "professionalism" is manifested.

The study will take the form of a case study involving ten quality teachers from five different public secondary schools in Gauteng. The practices and beliefs of these teachers will be explored through individual interviews. To provide supplementary information I will interview a focus group consisting of approximately four to eight teachers from each of the five schools. Their contribution will also serve to probe the research issues further and to highlight specific significant areas for observation.

The researcher will report on the data collected and the findings in her Dissertation for a Master of Education Degree (University of the Witwatersrand). It is hoped the findings will also be shared with the broader education community.

Teachers will benefit directly and indirectly, mostly in the longer term, from the research as the researcher believes the data collected will do the following:

- Identify and describe quality improvement processes that are effective, genuine and sustainable and that can be adopted by teachers in all schools and by policy-makers.
- Provide an explanation for why certain schools, both previously advantaged and disadvantaged, have achieved improvements in quality. This will be done by describing and explaining what quality teachers in these schools actually do and believe so these actions and beliefs can be developed in all teachers.
- Identify specific factors/criteria of the quality assurance policies (for example, IQMS) that contribute more (have greater consequences for improvement) to quality teaching and learning so that attention can be vigorously focused on these rather than trying to address all aspects in a superficial manner.

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- Describe and explain which model of accountability is considered useful and meaningful by quality teachers so that this model may be strengthened in schools and developed and adopted by education policy-makers.

The participant teachers will be making a contribution to improving the quality of the context in which they and other teachers perform their work and the manner in which it is done.

Learners will also benefit in the long run from improvements in the quality of teaching they experience as well as other factors affecting their education, such as, improved teacher morale, better teacher-learner relationships and a greater sense of responsibility on the part of teachers for doing their work well.

The researcher does not envisage any risk to any participant. Participants will be adult teachers.

The names used in the report both of the schools and the participants will be fictitious to protect confidentiality and to be sensitive to all parties involved. Any participant may withdraw from the study at any time should he or she no longer wish to participate. A copy of the report will be made available to the participants.

Anthea Cereseto
Researcher
19 July 2007

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APPENDIX 2A School background questionnaire

SCHOOL NAME: _____ PSEUDONYM: _____

1	Location of the school?
2	How old is the school?
3	How many learners are currently enrolled? Last year? Next year? Is the enrolment stable, growing or decreasing on a year-on-year basis?
4	How many teachers on the staff? GDE? SGB?
5	How many support staff? GDE? SGB?
6	How would you describe the history of this school? Type of pupils, background achievement? What was the matric pass rate and University exemption rate over the last three years?
7	What is important in this school? What is valued? What is the school particularly proud of?
8	Are teachers faced with any particular contextual challenges?
9	How do teachers relate to one another? Are they friendly and supportive to all staff members? Are there cliques? Do teachers co-operate and share or do they prefer to work alone? How stable is the staff in terms of years of service at the school?

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10	How well qualified are the teachers? Are they comfortable with the NCS demands? What is their attitude to ongoing professional development?
11	How supportive are the parents?
12	Does the SGB play any role in academic and professional matters?
13	What are the annual school fees?
14	Do you have a school-devised programme for improving learner performance? Is it working? If yes, why? If no, why not?
15	What in your opinion is the major factor that is hindering learners from improving their achievement levels?
16	What aspect of their work do teachers in your school complain about the most?

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APPENDIX 2B Individual and focus group teachers' questionnaire for written response

(Teachers' version had spaces in which the answers could be written)

REAL NAME: _____ PSEUDONYM: _____

1. PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

1. What subject/s do you teach?
2. What has prepared you to teach the subject you are teaching? (qualifications/experience)
3. What has been of most benefit – the academic preparation or the professional preparation (pedagogy/methodology/sociology/philosophy etc)? Please give your reasons for this response.
    a. Has mentoring by more experienced teachers contributed to your development as teacher? Explain.
4. How long have you been teaching?

2. PERSONAL BELIEFS/EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

With respect to self:

5. What aspects of the job give you the most/least satisfaction?
6. What would make you give up teaching?
7. Do you actively encourage people to become teachers?
8. Please think of a metaphor to describe yourself as a teacher.

3. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RELATED TO ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING POLICY AND PRACTICES (Numbering continued from oral questionnaire)

54. Do you feel confident about assessment (and the terminology) as understood in the NCS?
55. Do you use the assessment guidelines for your subject? Are they helpful?
56. Do you have the National Protocol on Assessment?
57. Do you adhere to it? If "yes" how? If "no", why not?
58. What do you understand by each of these terms: (baseline, formative, diagnostic, summative)?
    a. Are these concepts helpful in planning your assessment? Do you know what percentage of your assessment falls into each of these categories?
59. What process do you use in your department (you alone or with your colleague) to reflect about all the different assessment tasks that the National Protocol requires you to administer with your learners?
60. Are you able to give feedback to your learners? How often and how soon after an assessment task was completed?
61. What percentage of your assessment is undertaken by: self, peer, group, teacher?
62. Describe some of your informal assessment activities which you use in your class.
63. To what extent do external assessment demands (term and final year exams) determine the tasks you give your learners?
64. Who designs the assessment tasks you give your learners?
    a. If someone else designs the task without your input are you happy to administer it as it is give? If "yes", why? If "no", why not?
65. Do you design different tasks for learners with different learning abilities?

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66. One of the most difficult aspects of assessment is deciding on the cognitive level a task should demand. In what ways do the outcomes and assessment criteria stipulated by the NCS help you to decide on levels of cognitive demand, when designing assessment tasks?
    a. Are there any specific performance standards and assessment criteria that contribute more to the development of quality teaching and learning than others?
67. Do you feel compelled by any external agency (Education Department or school) to ensure that your learners get scores that are, in your opinion, higher than reflect their current demonstrated ability?
68. Do you design easier tasks so that learners can perform well and you can meet externally (department or school) driven achievement targets?
69. In what ways have the Matric exams, CTAs or any other standardised testing helped you in designing assessment tasks for your learners?
70. Many teachers complain that the DoE (National Protocol) administrative demands of recording and reporting take away teaching time. Do you agree with this perception? Please expand on your response with a little detail.
71. What do you do to improve the learning of under-prepared learners in your class?

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APPENDIX 2C Semi-structured interview schedule for individual teachers and focus group teachers

SCHOOL: _____ PSEUDONYM: _____

1 PERSONAL BELIEFS/EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

With respect to teaching and learning:

1. Try to describe your personal philosophy of teaching and learning. What makes a good teacher?
2. Do you feel that your philosophy is shared by other colleagues in your school? Do you ever discuss these kinds of issues?
3. What determines the content and methods you use in your teaching?
4. Do you explain to other teachers in your school why you use these methods/approaches?
5. Do you explain to your learners why you use these methods/approaches?
6. Do you have to adopt these methods across the different classes that you teach? Please describe an example.
7. How do you know when you have been successful in a lesson? Describe an occasion.
8. How much interaction do you have with parents and what is the nature of the interaction? What does it contribute?

With respect to learners:

9. What are the things you believe teachers should know and understand about their learners?
10. Do you find the learners today the same as in the past? What are the main differences?
    a. How does this affect the way you approach your work?
11. How do you determine that your strong learners have attained the depth you require?
12. How do you know that your weak learners have attained the depth you require?
13. Do you ever set achievement/performance targets for learners?

2 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONALISM

14. What does being "a professional" mean to you? (Explore ideas of the status of the work)
15. What does being a professional teacher" mean to you? (Explore ideas of teacher professionalism)
16. Do you think that the way teachers' work is currently conceived in South Africa makes use of your professional judgment?
17. Do you think that the way your work is conceived in your school makes use of your professional judgment?
18. What does the concept/idea of professional autonomy mean for you?
19. Is there a conflict in your understanding of the concept of autonomy with the IQMS policies?
20. When given an instruction about the curriculum or about assessment, what is your leeway in implementing this instruction?
    a. What happens if you do not want to do what was instructed?
21. Do you reflect on your teaching and learning experiences? If yes, how often and what sort of things do you reflect on? What do you do with your own conclusions? If "no", why don't you?

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3 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY EDUCATION

22. What do you understand by the concept of "quality education?
    a. Have you thought about quality education in a global context?
23. Have you ever felt you were not delivering quality education because you were focusing on curriculum goals or targets set by other people?
24. Do you feel competent to deliver quality education in the current school environment? Explain.
25. What do you need (if anything) from the district (or any other educational authority) to improve the quality of your teaching?
26. Have you some ideas about how quality can be improved in your classroom and in your school?

4 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RELATED TO CURRICULUM POLICY AND PRACTICES

27. What is your opinion of the NCS and its underlying pedagogical philosophy?
    a. Did the introduction of the new curriculum serve to motivate or demotivate you? Why? (Is it a prescriptive policy?)
28. Do the NCS help you to decide on the content you need to teach? (its depth and scope and its cognitive level of demand)?

5 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RELATED TO EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS/MEASURES/POLICIES

29. Who do you consider yourself accountable to?
30. What do you think of the IQMS process? Has it helped you or others in any way?
31. Has your school been gone through WSE?
    a. If "yes", how was it experienced by you and the wider school?
    b. What do you think were the main benefits from the process?
    c. Have you seen changes and improvement made in your school after the completion of WSE?
    d. Have you personally introduced any changes into your teaching and into your assessment subsequent to WSE?
    e. Were there any negative consequences?

6 PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES

32. Have you taken action independently to develop your own capacity to deliver quality education? How?
33. Do you have opportunities to share new ideas with colleagues? If not, why not?
34. How often do you reflect on your teaching and the learners' performance? In what forum? (alone, with colleagues)
35. Have you been involved in teacher-led development work in the school? If you have, do you think that this work contributes towards improving the quality of education of learners?
    a. Are you involved in any professional partnerships or collaboration ventures with colleagues from your own school or from other schools?
    b. Are you involved in mentoring or guiding colleagues or have you been a beneficiary of effective mentoring or guidance?
36. Have you contributed to education policy development in any way? If yes, how?
    a. Have you ever read draft legislation and submitted comment? If "yes", on what topic? Why did you choose to do this?

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7 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORKLOAD

37. If you can't get all the work done, on what basis do you prioritise tasks?
38. How much time outside school hours do you spend on school work?
    a. What do you feel about spending this extra time on school work?
39. Do you work in the school holidays? What kind of work (catching up, designing lessons, designing tasks)?
40. When you have a break (a window of no teaching) during the school day what do you spend it on?
41. What aspects of your work do you think are a total waste of time and should be scrapped? Why do you do this work?
42. Are there any roles you perform that could be done by people better suited to the task?
43. Do you consider yourself over-worked?

8 PERSONAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES

With respect to use of time:

44. What percentage of lesson time (on average) is spent on teaching and learning activities (including assessment for learning) and how much on other matters, such as: administration (including recording data), discipline and other interruptions?
45. How does that affect curriculum progress and the quality of teaching and learning?
46. What sort of things do you do to protect teaching time?
47. What sort of things do your do to ensure that learners use class time well?
48. In what ways do learners participate in lessons?

With respect to classroom climate:

49. How does the climate affect the efficacy of your teaching?
50. Who is responsible for the climate in the classroom?
51. How free are learners to interact with the teacher – asking for help as well as challenging statements, decisions, practices?

9 SCHOOL RESOURCES/PRACTICES/FACTORS

52. Are there factors in this school context that assist you in delivering quality teaching and learning? If "yes" what are they? If "no", what do you believe would be helpful? (Seek answers relating to availability of physical and human support resources, school vision (priorities/focus – is it on academic performance?) and ethos/climate (secure, relaxed, non-threatening, respectful, disciplined, democratic), degree of competitiveness, mutual respect, management/leadership style, attitude to quality and professional development, is the school a learning organisation?, quality/qualifications of colleagues, degree of collegiality, classroom observation and feedback to teachers, protection of teaching time, expectations for learners, learners' SES, parental support and involvement (specifically in matters related to learning), community involvement)
53. Can you think of a metaphor to describe your school and the work you do in it?

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APPENDIX 3A **Mind map of "Beliefs of quality teachers about quality education**

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APPENDIX 3B **Diagram re-classifying data from mind maps: "Factors that operate on the INSTITUTIONAL level that enable or constrain delivery of quality education**

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