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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.

Cereseto, Anthea

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Table 2

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

	View of the problem/aim	Approach to quality improvement	Main sets of tension	View of teacher responsibility	Teacher ownership of the process of change	Teacher development and support	Teacher monitoring	Autonomy and professionalism	Role expansion	Time
RNCS/ NCS[49]	This aim of the curriculum is to guide teachers to deliver quality education outcomes for all South African learners; to equip them for meaningful and full participation, and to enable them to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.	The curriculum guides practices, processes and learning content ("high knowledge/ high skills"). The approach is outcomes-centred. The curriculum for each grade is described in terms of outcomes and assessment criteria (standards). This curriculum is more specific than C2005 and is controlled by NPRR.[50] Arguably it is more behaviourist than humanist in approach. The critical tradition is seen in its aim to empower learners and achieve equity and social justice.	Tension arises for teachers when the curriculum does not always provide sufficient guidance. Teachers are expected to use approaches designed for the type of learner envisaged in the curriculum statements but which is very different from the one in the classroom. Many teachers do not have the knowledge and skills which the curriculum demands of them.	The teacher is required to interpret and deliver the curriculum in terms of its intended outcome statements, assessment criteria and assessment plan.[51]	Teachers' participation is essential for delivery of this curriculum. However, its complexity and the numerous roles ascribed to them demotivate many teachers (Chisholm *et.al*, 2005: ix-xiv).	The "high knowledge/high skills" aspiration of the NCS requires extensive deepening of teachers' knowledge. Much research shows that teacher development programmes are of low quality (Christie *et al*., 2007: 84).	Teachers' work is controlled via the NPRR which prescribes the number of assessment tasks learners must do and the manner in which achievement must be recorded and reported. Teachers do not follow a syllabus and/or prescribed text book, so the content they teach is monitored at the assessment point.	The demands of the curriculum require high levels of professional knowledge and professional judgment as teachers are required to design their work schedules and learning programmes to achieve the learning outcomes specified in the (R)NCS. Autonomy is restricted in so far as the number, form and timing of assessment tasks are specified in SAGs[52] and the NPRR.	Teachers' role is expanded because of seven roles educators are expected to perform.	Teachers' workload is increased; they spend more time on tasks other than teaching and learning activities in the classroom (Chisholm *et.al.*, 2005: 128-183).
WSE[53]	The quality and efficiency of the education system is poor. WSE has the purpose of evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school, including the quality of teaching and learning, with a view to drawing up the School Improvement Plan (SIP).[54]	The approach is management-centred. Quality improvement focuses on improving the quality of the management of learning and teaching measured by learner achievement and by the provision of a safe secure and disciplined environment. Supervisors look for evidence, mostly in the form of paperwork. By evaluating schools in terms of standardised descriptions of what the required quality should look like it is behaviourist in approach.	WSE supervisors are required to evaluate and look beyond superficial demonstrations of "quality" rather than ticking a checklist.[55] Tension arises when external evaluators apply bureaucratic authority without involving the principal/teachers who prepared the internal evaluation for the visit (Jansen, 2004). The development intention and the accountability role of the WSE policy are in tension (De Clercq, 2007a). The former enhances professionalism while the latter has the potential to restrict it if it is managerial and bureaucratic.	The teacher is held responsible for managing teaching and learning in the classroom in a manner that improves the achievement of learners. Teachers are expected to add value to the SES of the school community.	Teachers are involved in internal WSE which is a self-evaluation process. They are expected to identify school strengths and weaknesses in order to determine the SIP. The policy envisages teachers continually striving for quality improvement.	The school is expected to provide quality in-service development for teachers (Focus area 4 -"Quality of teaching and learning and educator development"). The purpose of the WSE Policy is mainly supportive and developmental, although it also monitors compliance with policies (section 1.1.3).[56]	This policy monitors teachers' performance in terms of the focus areas relevant to teaching and learning (4, 5, and 6).[57] (External) WSE is a bureaucratic form of accountability which uses a managerial approach. Supervisors compare the internal WSE with their evaluation but their report is written without involving the school.	This policy has the potential to threaten teacher professionalism and autonomy if supervisors are not able to make sound judgments and rate compliance with technicalities above quality learner achievement. Teacher professionalism is undermined when the evaluation report is compiled without consulting teachers.	The policy requires teachers' involvement in all nine areas of school operation.	The expectation that teachers are responsible for all areas of school functioning means that their workload is increased and their time for teaching and learning activities is reduced.

[49] Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) Policy. Gazette No.: 23406 and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) Qualifications and Assessment Policy Framework. The NCS (FET) comprises an Overview document, the Qualifications and Assessment Framework Grades 10-12 (General) and Subject Statements. These documents respectively describe the philosophical underpinning of the new curriculum, the mechanism through which learner achievement of the FET exit-level Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards are recognised at school, provincial and national levels and find acceptance globally in Higher Education and the world of work. They also describe the learning outcomes, assessment standards, and subject competence descriptions per grade, the content and the contexts for attaining Assessment Standards. Quality is to be regulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act and the General and Further Education Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act.
[50] National Protocol for Recording and Reporting (G.N. 29467, 11 December, 2006).
[51] School-based assessment plan (SBA) formerly known as continuous assessment (CASS).
[52] Subject Assessment Guidelines.
[53] Whole School Evaluation Policy, Gazette No. 22512.
[54] Schools' efforts to implement their SIPs are supported by their District that has to draw up the District Improvement Plan (DIP) which incorporates the improvement and development needs of all the schools in the District.The DIP is supposed to feed into provincial planning.
[55] Department of Education, 2002: 2, 3.
[56] Department of Education, 2001a: 7.
[57] This is integrated in the IQMS discussed below.

	View of the problem/aim	Approach to quality improvement	Main sets of tension	View of teacher responsibility	Teacher ownership of the process of change	Teacher development and support	Teacher monitoring	Autonomy and professionalism	Role expansion	Time
DAS/ PMS OF IQMS[58]	Quality of education is poor because teachers lack competence and therefore need development and monitoring. The teachers are the problem and need managing and incentivising. Those that perform at a satisfactory or higher level should be rewarded.	The approach here is management- or process-centred, although it attempts to appear learning and teaching-centred. The underlying assumption of the above system seems to be that if IQMS were to be successfully implemented and teachers took steps to pursue their identified personal growth, an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning would take place. This is a humanist approach. However, the performance measuring aspect is behaviourist because there is a reward for performing at levels described in the standardised instrument.	Tension exists between the developmental and potentially punitive aspects of this process. Gardiner (2003) argues that "IQMS is trying to "bring together three instruments which are morally and philosophically very different". It privileges managerial priorities as opposed to the needs of teachers (in Wits EPU, 2005: 22). On the one hand teachers are regarded as professional enough to self- and peer-evaluate their performance and identify their professional development needs (DAS) but not sufficiently so to be trusted without the application of a managerial accountability measure (PMS).	The teacher is responsible for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Limited recognition is accorded to contextual difficulties teachers face. The teacher must identify development needs (articulated in the Personal Growth Plan) and take steps to address them.	Teachers are compelled to undergo appraisal and submit a score annually. Non-compliance would be prejudicial to them. Compliance without commitment to the process is possible as is manipulation of scores to ensure that everyone meets the minimum to qualify for a salary notch increase. The fact that the score is used for salary purposes provides a strong disincentive for teachers to seek an honest and helpful development appraisal.	The stated purposes of IQMS are "to identify specific needs of educators, schools and district offices for support and development; to provide support for continued growth; to promote accountability; to monitor an institution's overall effectiveness; and to evaluate an educator's performance".[59] In practice teachers are rarely able to access the support that they indicate they need (Class Act, 2007: 42-44[60]).	PMS monitors and manages teachers in a bureaucratic manner. Teachers complete the instrument and the score is used for salary progression, grade progression, confirmation of appointments and rewards and incentives. DAS encourages reflection and personal development but this is eroded by competition and compliance with monitoring aspects.	The IQMS instrument describes "best practice" in terms of which teachers' professional practice is appraised. The fact that the same instrument manages performance and identifies areas for professional development undermines the usefulness of IQMS for developing professional judgment. There is little scope for autonomous judgment of what constitutes quality. Jansen (2004) calls IQMS the "Trojan Horse of accountability infringing on and eroding autonomy" (p. 57).	The IQMS instrument describes expectations of teachers which extend beyond teaching and learning activities. Teachers are required to participate in professional bodies, contribute to school development and participate in extra and co-curricular activities that develop learners holistically.	The expectation that teachers must perform effectively in all performance standards increases their workload and demands more time. These non-teaching and learning activities take time from the teachers' core functions.
SE 2003[61]	The education system is delivering poor learner performance[62] despite increased inputs. The study tries to understand the quality of education available to Grade 3 learners using 26 indicators of quality: context, input, process and output indicators. It provides a baseline for quality assurance purposes.	The approach is teacher- and teaching and learning-centred. Recognition is also given to school context and culture. The study seeks to understand teacher-related factors influencing learner performance. The message about quality is that it lies in the way teachers use their educational resources and not in the amount available in the school. This study measures the effectiveness of the approach to quality of the curriculum, WSE, IQMS and other policies.	Tension exists between teacher-related factors responsible for quality such as teachers' confidence and competence in their teaching knowledge and practices and context-related factors such as learners who do not have equal access to reading materials at home, pre-school education, school resource centres, adequate classrooms and LTSM.	The teacher is stated to be responsible for some things: effective use of contact time and for having the right attitude. The study recognises that many factors are beyond the direct control of the teacher, such as learner nutrition needs, access to pre-primary education, and improvement in LER.	Teachers do not all appear to take ownership. The study finds "low morale and poor attitude of some teachers" (p. 70). They are not confident in OBE despite receiving training.	The study recognises the need for teachers to upgrade in specific subject disciplines. The quality of in-service training needs to be assured. The study finds that teachers must be supported in the form of timely delivery of LTSM, improved facilities and improved LER.	The study finds that provincial education departments should focus on monitoring school performance (particularly in numeracy and literacy) and implementation of OBE. Teacher development, use of teaching and learning time as well as teacher attendance and punctuality are identified as areas in need of greater control.	Teacher professionalism is expressed in the idea that teachers must develop their professional knowledge and adhere to professional standards such as being punctual and responsible.	The inequity in the system places greater responsibility on teachers to make up for learners' home backgrounds which are not supportive.	There is greater demand on teachers' time because of the expectation that they bridge the gap which arises as a result of learners not experiencing home instruction time to support school time.

[58] Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for School-based Educators - Developmental Appraisal (DA), Performance Measurement (PM) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE) , Resolution, Resolutions 1 and 8 of 2003 of the Education Labour Relations Council.
[59] ELRC, 2003: 1.
[60] A study of IQMS implementation and related matters, commissioned by the National Department of Education. The names of the researchers are not given.
[61] Systemic Evaluation Report on the Foundation Phase (Mainstream) conducted by the National Department of Education Quality Assurance Directorate.
[62] The study finds very poor performance in numeracy and literacy. Learners performed very badly in Numeracy (30% national average score) and Literacy (39% national average score for Reading and Writing), in particular. 40% of learners do not complete the three year foundation phase within the three years with significant cost implications for the State.

WITS EPU

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SE 2006[63]	The education system is delivering poor learner performance[64] despite increased inputs. The study tries to understand the quality of education available to Grade 6 learners using the same 26 indicators of quality as used for the SE 2003 study: context, input, process and output indicators. It provides a baseline for quality assurance purposes.	As above	As above	The study claims that educator classroom practices have the greatest impact on learner achievement (p. 42). Teachers are expected to take on additional roles, change their teaching practices and improve their qualifications and knowledge.	The study finds job satisfaction levels are low (37% of teachers are considering career changes) (p. 52).	The study states that the qualifications of all teachers and principals should be improved and that ongoing professional development be provided for Mathematics, Natural Sciences and LOLT. Also the DoE and provincial districts should provide support in order to improve the quality of education.	Teachers' attendance, punctuality and the effective use of teaching time are the main focus of recommendations related to monitoring.	As above	The study recommends that schools make up for home deficiencies thus extending the role of teachers. The study also states that because of the poor achievement levels a greater burden will be placed on teachers in grade 7 and higher (p. 113).	As above
QLP[65]	The country is not providing sufficient high quality Grade 12 Senior Certificate passes.	In order to raise the quality of Grade 12 passes a combination of management-centred and teacher- and teaching and learning-centred approaches are used. This approach is an example of the merged "outside-in" and "inside-out" approach[66] to reform. It is based on the assumption that school performance improvement results from a combination of accountability and support measures. This project reflects aspects of the critical tradition. Quality is measured in terms of "customer empowerment" and meeting social justice and equity aims.	There is tension around the effectiveness of support interventions because a minimum level of teacher capacity and school internal accountability are required for the support to be of value (Hopkins *et al*., 1997). Tension is created between teachers' responsibility to achieve quality improvements despite the adverse contextual factors at the school and learners' home level, such as lack of home instruction/support for educational purposes.	Teachers are responsible for achieving set learner achievement targets in co-operation with those providing support. They are expected to implement strategies for improvement that they have been taught and to use their new skills and knowledge.	The programme was considered an "unqualified success" as the results of the QLP schools were significantly better than similar non-project schools. These results indicated that teachers owned the process.	Training programmes that focused on Mathematics and English content knowledge, school governance and leadership development programmes and strategies for improving Districts' capacity for providing relevant support were put in place as the support measures.	Teachers' performance was measured in terms of learners achieving the set targets. This project provides evidence of the efficacy of an improvement strategy that combines demand (better learner performance – the targets) and support (focused training programmes). Bureaucratic control was limited.	Teachers' professionalism was supported and strengthened through the development and support they received. Teachers used the capacity developed in the QLP, exercised their professional judgment, autonomy, and internal accountability to achieve quality outcomes.	The focus was on teaching and learning improvement to attain performance targets. These tasks fall within the normal role of teachers.	Teachers' time focused on teaching and learning activities and developing themselves professionally to meet the quality demands.
Dinaledi schools[67]	Too few learners obtain a Senior Certificate with higher grade passes in Mathematics and Physical Science.	This is a merged paradigm approach to improving quality. Performance improvement targets are an important aspect as well as the provision of resources and teacher capacity-building. The approach is similar to that of the QLP above but with elements of a behaviourist approach as standards/ targets are set and	There is tension between capacity and support. Teachers require capacity to use the additional resources (inputs/support in the form of teacher knowledge as well as facilities and LTSM). There needs to be a basic level of functionality in the school for the inputs to be of value.	The teachers are responsible for turning the increased resources into improved levels of achievement.	The success of this project requires that teachers take ownership for improving the quality of passes. They are expected to use the resources and new knowledge effectively, as they have been trained, to	Support and development in the form of workshops on curriculum content, subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are provided as part of the increased resources. In some cases mentorship and twinning with achieving schools is part of the support. However, the support is	Teachers are monitored in terms of improved learner achievement. Assessment tasks for Dinaledi schools provide interim measurements. Their use of the resources is also monitored by means of bureaucratic controls such as completion of returns and to a lesser extent through	Teachers' professionalism is supported and strengthened through the development and support they receive. Their capacity is developed, thereby strengthening internal accountability and enabling them to exercise professional judgment and	As above	As above

[63] Grade 6 Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation Report, December 2005.
[64] The study finds that the majority of Grade 6 learners have not achieved the expected standards. The national mean score for Language (LOLT) is 38%, for Mathematics it is 27% and for Natural Sciences 41%.
[65] A Business Trust Project, in partnership with the National Department of Education, worked with 524 high schools across all nine provinces for a period of five years. The HSRC evaluated the project at three stages and published four reports on it (HSRC, 2001, 2003, 2005a, 2005b).
[66] These approaches are discussed briefly in 2.1.6 (Table 1) above.
[67] The National Department of Education's National Strategy for developing Mathematics, Science and Technology. It entails the establishment of 102 dedicated Mathematics and Physical Science schools across the country. Like the QLP it also targeted poor and under-resourced schools. The number was increased to 400 in 2006 and extended to better-resourced schools with greater capacity.

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		there are rewards for achieving them.			improve learner performance.	not as sustained and focused as for the QLP. The project provides additional resources (inputs) to schools to help them achieve better quality outcomes, e.g. textbooks, computers, additional funding, additional teacher(s).	supervisory visits from trainers assigned to the project.	autonomy.		
"Schools that work"[68]	Some schools with the same contexts achieve better than others.	This is a culture-centred approach to quality improvement. If some schools with the same contextual conditions can achieve quality performances then other similar schools could do so as well. For this to happen the dynamics of the "Schools that work" have to be understood and applied. The study seeks to discover these dynamics and determine whether they are replicable. This study seems to recognise a humanist approach. It claims that it is possible for schools to achieve quality without being controlled by set standards or incentives/sanctions.	The study points to factors, particularly teachers' "internal accountability" that enable "Schools that work" to achieve quality despite their negative contextual factors: learners' low SES backgrounds, inadequate resources, and teachers' poor educational qualifications.	Teachers focus on their central tasks in a purposeful and committed manner within a school culture that expects achievement, and acknowledges success. The schools show "strong internal accountability" which enables them to meet the demands of external accountability" (ibid: 4, 5).	In these schools teachers and school leaders have a "sense of agency" and strong inner capacities" (p. 114). These dynamics prevail despite inadequate resources, insufficient and inappropriate district support, a lack of expertise, poorly prepared learners, problematic socio-economic conditions.	The study found that building the capacity of teachers (their knowledge, skill and use of resources) is a crucial dimension of enabling schools to address their central tasks of teaching and learning. Teachers in the "Schools that work" had sufficient internal capacity for internal accountability to be aligned with external accountability demands.	Capacity, a component of internal accountability, is an essential part of school performance, and it enables the schools to meet the demands of external accountability, manifested in good learner performance. Monitoring or bureaucratic forms of accountability do not increase capacity but supporting and developing teachers does.	Teachers exercise professionalism and their autonomy is not unreasonably restricted. They display extraordinary commitment. They uphold high professional standards. They are internally accountable.	The teachers in "Schools that work" do experience role expansion but their high level of internal accountability enables them to manage their contexts, prioritise roles and focus on achieving learner performance.	The teachers have heavy workloads and they put in additional time to achieve quality learner performance.
Inter-national evaluations: TIMSS, PIRLS, SACMEQII	Access to education has not necessarily given access to quality education that prepares learners for the age of knowledge and information. There appears to be a widening quality gap. Cross-national tests measure the skills of learners in different countries. South African learners are achieving very poor results in these tests.[69]	The approach is learning and teaching-centred although other indicators of quality are also investigated. Participation in tests measures South African learners' cognitive skills and content knowledge relative to learners in other countries and identifies deficiencies and areas for improvement. These studies measure the effectiveness of the approach to quality of the curriculum, WSE, IQMS and other policies.	Tension exists between the demand for improvement in quality at the same time as demand for increased access, equity and efficiency. The global policy environment opposes increased public sector expenditure yet the education system is required to provide quality education opportunities for a greater number of learners in an equitable manner.	Most of the blame for poor performance is placed on teachers but analysts also identify other contextual factors: LER, teacher qualifications, SES and resources (Van der Berg, 2006: 7) and learners' personal home backgrounds and school environment factors (Howie *et al.*, 2007).	What teachers know and do in the classroom determines the quality of learner performance. The effect on performance of contextual factors is also recognised. There is the possibility of teachers "teaching to the test" in order to prepare learners "better" for external assessment.	Moloi and Strauss (2005) who analysed the SACMEQII data states that "Building the capacity of teachers as mediators of the curriculum may be the ultimate answer." (p. 26).	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed

[68] The Minister of Education established a Committee to study middle quintile schools that performed well in the Senior Certificate Examinations (the proxy for quality), (Christie *et al.*, 2007).

[69] In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2003 South Africa came last in both Mathematics and Science out of 47 participating countries, achieving an average score of approximately half of the international average score. This is despite the fact that the South African learners who wrote these tests were 13 months older than the international average age of participants (TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2004: 22). SACMEQII tested a random sample of 3416 Grade 6 learners from 169 public schools. Just over 44% of the learners were found to be performing at a Grade 3 level. Only 6% performed at "competent" numeracy level, i.e. grade appropriate level. Learners in rural areas fared worse. Factors that could play a role in achieving improvement were identified, for example, supportive textbooks and other teacher-developed learning support material. The summary report concludes: "Building the capacity of teachers as mediators of the curriculum may be the ultimate answer". The PIRLS 2006 Summary Report of South African Children's Reading Achievement (Howie *et al.*, 2007) also provides grim reading. Approximately 30,000 learners in grades 4 and 5 from more than 400 schools in South Africa participated in this assessment of reading literacy involving 40 countries. South African learners scored the lowest of all the countries. Both our grade 4s and 5s scored the lowest compared to grade 4 learners in the other countries. Performance in all 11 languages was below the international mean (p. 64). Van der Berg (2006) reports the finding that "more than half of grade 6 students perform at a grade 3 level or lower in Mathematics" (p. 7).