

https://dspace.org/

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

2010-02-26T06:44:31Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/7567

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Table 1

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

	"Outside-In"/behaviourist approach	"Inside-Out"/humanist approach	Merged paradigm/combined approach
Historical overview of school quality improvement reforms, their features and impact	The earlier school quality improvement studies were primarily quantitative, structural and de-contextual, referred to as the "Outside-In" approach (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998; Muller and Roberts, 2000). Reforms attempted to transform schools by applying external influence. Examples of "*outside-in*" strategies include: research and development (R and D) (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998), production-function approaches or input-output models (Lieberman, 1998), and the systemic reforms of the late 1980s (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 6, 7, 19). These approaches were prominent from the late 1950s but particularly common in the 1970s and 1980s (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 7). The R and D processes were funded and undertaken by development centres external to the school and education district. The programmes covered a range of areas such as curriculum packages, textbooks, and early enrichment or intervention programmes for disadvantaged children (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998:1287, 1288). This type endeavours to be scientific in its approach by using experts in the field, using high quality materials, field-testing the programmes and only disseminating and publicising those that had proven positive outcomes as far as student learning is concerned. The behaviourist view of quality is evident.	The "Inside-Out" approach (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998; Muller and Roberts, 2000) was common in the 1970s and 1980s alongside the "outside-ins" with one or other at any time having ascendancy (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 7). The *"inside-out*" reform efforts are school-based (ibid: 2). This approach relies on individual schools identifying their improvement needs and implementing strategies, sometimes in collaboration with other schools (Lieberman, 1998). It is strongly influenced by progressivism which promotes "learner-centeredness, 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 progressivists do not focus specifically on academic outcomes and dislike testing. Schools involved in these reforms usually demonstrate shared decision-making amongst staff with possibly a decision-making council responsible for developing the school improvement plan/programme. They often belong to a network of schools similarly engaged in a reform programme. This approach relies on a belief that if control resides with those at the site there will be improvement because the school can conduct its own internal research and solve its own problems. At the same time it acknowledges the professional worth of the teachers. The inherent uniqueness of each school demands unique solutions rather than the externally devised common programmes which the "outside-ins" suggested as solutions (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1291, 1292).	Standards-based reform and performance-based accountability emerged in the early 1990s in the US in response to the very limited success of earlier reforms (the "outside-in" and the "inside-out" approaches). The standards- and performance-based reforms hold schools accountable for attaining externally devised standards for learner achievement. This approach claims to allow more scope for the exercise of professional judgment and autonomy. "New accountability"[30] which merges bureaucratic and performance-based aspects emerged to meet the need to ensure reliability and consistency. "New accountability" includes: tightly defined curriculum targets emphasising higher order thinking; standardised testing and performance-based assessment; the requirement to use innovative teaching strategies which are constructivist-inspired; accountability regimes that link performance to funding or are used to rank schools; greater acknowledgement of parents' rights, choice, and involvement in governance; market involvement in the form of more involvement of business partners and sponsors and promoters of corporate concepts into education language; measures aimed at improving the status, quality and professional standards of teachers, sometimes requiring periodic re-certification; efforts to restructure schools and even change the entire way they operate (Hargreaves *et al.*, 1998: 2).
How quality is measured	In the "inputs" model quality improvement is measured in terms of "outputs", for example, the numbers of textbooks learners have access to or the extent of the improvement in the learner to educator ratio. Quality is judged by the extent to which there is compliance with predetermined, prescribed standards and procedures and the level of efficiency with which outcomes are achieved. Emphasis is on managerial activities.	Quality improvements are measured on an individual and idiosyncratic basis. This varies in terms of what individual teachers regard as "quality". Quality is judged by the extent to which the needs of individual learners are met, the degree of customer satisfaction or the fulfilment of learners' unique potential. Learners' attainment of higher scores on a standardised test or fewer incidents of racial intolerance are both deemed "quality" improvements.	Quality is measured by the extent to which the identified externally determined quality outcomes are achieved with the full involvement and support of participants. The main means of identifying the quality of the outcomes is through performance on standardised tests.
The role of the teacher	The role of the teacher is not seen as central. The teachers' willingness or capacity to utilise the "inputs" is not accorded much consideration. This approach views teachers as deficient and blames them for the failure of reforms and places all the responsibility on them to get learning right by managing their resources better. There is scant reference to assisting the 'deficient' teachers to become more competent. Better management is demanded and teachers are expected to comply by following procedures (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1289).	This approach emphasises the activities of the teacher in the classroom in a unique context. It recognises the centrality of the teacher in quality improvement initiatives. Teachers "own" the process of change and see themselves as agents for change and improvement (Christie and Potterton, 1997; Christie *et al.*, 2007). This approach focuses on developing the internal accountability/capacity of teachers and accessing external support to build this capacity. Staff development and extensive on-going support is critical for success (Calhoun and Joyce, 1998: 1293). This approach relies on the professionalism of teachers and views them as agents of reform. It does not blame teachers for past failures but sees them as having the power to bring about quality improvements.	Teachers are expected to deliver quality outcomes and there are usually incentives for them to do so. New and additional roles and new ways of working, including: attending curriculum planning meetings, school development meetings and working collaboratively/co-operatively to do these things – joint decision-making, teamwork and partnerships; supervising/mentoring/peer coaching others, professional development activities (Helsby and McCulloch, in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996: 16). The idea of working with standards transforms the role of the teacher, foregrounding the conceptual responsibility of teachers to create learning programmes that align standards with learner context.
The form of teacher regulation	Teachers have to respond to externally imposed solutions to quality problems. They generally are required to comply with what is imposed and to adhere to prescriptive demands. There is little opportunity to exercise professional judgment or autonomy.	Because of the centrality of teachers in this approach their professional judgment and autonomy are respected. Teachers are not highly regulated: their learning is regulated but their teaching is not. Teachers are in control of measures to improve quality. Merely expecting or demanding improvement (external accountability demands) does not bring about quality gains unless there are high levels of internal accountability. This approach confirms Noguera's (2005) conclusion: "It takes more than pressure to help struggling schools".	In this approach teachers are relatively free from excessive regulation and monitoring of compliance and can focus instead on the outcome. Put simply, product is more important than process; what teachers achieve (through their students' attainment) is more important than how they accomplish it. Teacher regulation takes the form of prescribing standards and measuring performance of teachers against these. Curriculum is externally determined and may become narrowed as teachers endeavour to improve performance on standardised measures. In some cases methodology is also prescribed.

30 Fuhrman, Elmore, Goertz, Herman, Ingersoll and Sisken in Fuhrman and Elmore (Eds), 2004; Abelmann and Elmore, 1999; Gross and Goertz, 2005; and others.

	"Outside-In"/behaviourist approach	"Inside-Out"/humanist approach	Merged paradigm/combined approach
Brief description of the model of accountability	This form of regulation demonstrates *bureaucratic accountability* (Darling-Hammond, 1989). State agencies make laws, policies and rules detailing procedures and prescribe the manner in which the law should be implemented. The *bureaucratic accountability* model has assumed greater significance in many education systems because it is easier to apply, monitor and to enforce compliance (p. 59). This model depends on the hierarchical structure of the education system, the standardisation of decisions and control as well as standardisation of the desired outcome: "Policies are made at the top of the system and handed down to administrators. ... Teachers follow the rules and procedures (class schedules, curricula …), and students are processed according to them" (ibid: 63). This model is based on certain assumptions (ibid: 63): first, that all students are sufficiently the same and respond to all processes and practices in the same predictable manner; and second, that a body of knowledge exists which perfectly describes learning and teaching practices. This knowledge then has to be turned into standardised rules and regulations which have to be complied with. Reporting and inspection systems control this and failure to comply results in negative consequences of some sort. The fundamental assumption of this model is that if teachers and schools follow procedure they will achieve the desired outcome. Inversely, if the desired outcome is not attained then the assumption is that the rules were insufficient and additional ones are prescribed to define the processes further.	The form of regulation discussed above promotes *professional accountability* (Darling-Hammond, 1989). In this model professional bodies are established to monitor and ensure that the occupation, which serves the public, is practised with the necessary degree of competence and at the standards expected. Teachers must have the correct qualifications and specialised knowledge to do the work at the required professional standard. Professional bodies may regulate the performance and demand adherence to a code of ethics and professional standards (p. 61). Emphasis on teacher professionalism is based on the belief that teaching is a complex, knowledge-based work requiring judgment in non-routine situations and learning is an interactive and individually determined process. Improvement in student learning is as a result of building professional competence and developing the expertise/knowledge of the teachers to enable them to practise their profession, that is, exercise professional discretion on an on-going basis. The teachers assume responsibility for their learners' performance and evaluate themselves in terms of professional expectations and the higher standards they set themselves. This conception relies on the assumption that teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable and therefore able to exercise professional judgment (Wits EPU, 2005: 8).	This reform approach gives rise to performance-based accountability measures which Fuhrman (1999) terms "the new accountability" model[31]. Policy-makers develop standards of performance for all learners then align assessment to these standards. Learner achievement in terms of the standardised assessment tests is the accountability measure. Targets are set and consequences for achieving or failing to achieve them are determined. Schools are held responsible for taking the actions necessary for improving their levels of performance on pre-determined standards of performance measures. Inspections of schools focus on measures to improve the attainment of performance rather than compliance with regulations (p. 2). "New accountability" depends on the following assumptions: performance can be measured; teachers and learners put in more effort because of the possibility of positive consequences or negative consequences; and teachers' efforts at improving instruction would result in better learner performance (for all learners) (Fuhrman, 2003: 2, 3). It also relies on teachers' receiving sufficient capacity-building to meet external accountability demands, in ideal circumstances, giving rise to alignment between external and internal accountability.[32]
Features of the approach as seen in South African reforms	The evidence of this approach is the growing belief that quality improvement can be externally mandated and managed into existence. Researchers such as Jansen (2005), Taylor and Vinjevold (1999) and Crouch and Mabogoane (2001) identify a management-centred approach to reform. They believe better management by school leaders and teachers of educational resources and the teaching and learning process would lead to quality improvements. Jansen (2005) attributes the failure of the South African reforms, despite very significant investments, to the "lack of co-ordinated and concentrated management of these three key factors: teachers, textbooks and time" (p. 73). He is supported in this conclusion by earlier researchers: in *Getting Learning Right* (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999) and Taylor *et al*. in *Getting Schools Working* (2003) and Crouch and Mabogoane (2001). This approach reflects school effectiveness research's emphasis on a functionalist approach to achieving quality improvements. It "poses quantitative solutions to problems of quality, supports a technicist policy discourse, and suggests that quality improvement can best occur through allocative efficiency"[33] (Motala, 2001: 64). The assumption is that "inputs", externally determined and imposed on the school and the teachers would lead to quality improvement.	The focus of this approach is on the micro level of the school and it emphasises context. Research "shifts away from the homogenising tendencies of large-scale studies and draws attention to complexities, unpredictableness and uniqueness of classroom settings" (Motala, 2001: 62). The emphasis is on the school and the class as the central units of analysis, in other words the unique elements in individual schools are studied. Davidoff and De Jong (1997) suggest five factors that should be given attention for sustained improvement: "ownership of the process by the participants, effective and purposeful leadership by the schools, the self-understanding that is developed by the school community, sufficient and appropriate support from outside agencies and a core group of change agents within the school" (in Motala, 2001: 73). Christie and Potterton (1997) foreground the importance of "a culture of concern" in schools that manage reform initiatives within their unique contexts and bring about improvement. These schools demonstrate the ability to be active agents in the change process because of their resilience which arises from teachers' sense of responsibility, leadership, the centrality of teaching and learning, safety and organisation, and a culture of concern.	In this approach, improvements in quality ("outputs") are demanded while the necessary support in the form of human and material resources ("inputs") is given. Taylor (2001) speaks of this as "demand-pull" and "supply-push". The RNCS/NCS, which include assessment standards, is a systemic reform that aims to improve quality by setting standards on which learners will be assessed (and the performance of the system as a whole measured). The two aspects of the "new accountability" approach, support and demand are not as evident in practice although the policy appears to emphasise both. Research shows that support (teacher development) is insufficient, inappropriate and of varied quality (Christie *et al.*, 2007, 84, 85) and the consequences for not achieving the required levels of performance are somewhat limited and impact more on learners and the school as a collective rather than on individual teachers. As a result it is in reality more like an outside-in reform which relies heavily on bureaucratic accountability and this is creating work overload for teachers (Chisholm *et al*., 2005: 143-150). The QLP[34]and Dinaledi[35] projects (evaluated further in Table 2, pp. 40-43) are examples of merged paradigm reforms. In both of these projects teachers receive support in the form of additional resources such as text books and equipment, and professional development to support curriculum implementation while being held accountable for the delivery of improved learner performances in terms of set targets. The success of the projects was judged by the results of learners in external tests.[36]

31 This has achieved strong support (Darling-Hammond, 2004: 1047; Spillane, 2005: 1).
32 These concepts are discussed in more in chapters 2.3.6, p. 69, 6.2.2, p. 175 and 6.3.1, p. 175.
33 Economist's term for a budget necessitated investment choice from competing programmes or combinations of inputs (Motala, 2001: 64).
34 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).
35 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.
36 Muller and Roberts (2000) emphasise the importance of achievement outcomes as the final measure of reform success: "The proof of the pudding will always be in the eating" (p. 3).

	"Outside-In"/behaviourist approach	"Inside-Out"/humanist approach	Merged paradigm/combined approach
Critique of this model of accountability with respect to its impact on teachers and quality improvement	The *bureaucratic accountability* model gives little credence to teachers' knowledge and skills. Teachers are expected to perform the work as defined by those higher in the hierarchy who are distant from the implementation site. "The standard for accountability is compliance rather than effectiveness" (Darling-Hammond, 1989: 64). Darling-Hammond argues that this model cannot produce improved learning outcomes for all students because it is based on false assumptions that deny the realities of schools. The conception of professionalism that emerges in a *bureaucratic accountability* context is *managerialist professionalism* (Sachs, 1999: 1). Bureaucratic control measures undermine professionalism and deprofessionalise teaching. The employer controls teachers' work believing that bureaucratic controls can solve any problem and that practices that are appropriate in one school site can be applied in all sites. Ozga (2005) claims that in this form of professionalism the state controls teachers in a manner that "teachers willingly co-operate in their own oppression" (in Wits EPU, 2005: 8). Managers are seen as inherently good and should be given autonomy to manage while others must accept their authority. The principal has changed roles from being a senior colleague to an institutional manager responsible for compliance with policies and meeting targets and so on. A preferred version of professionalism results which "sees the teacher as a compliant technician who implements policy in an uncritical and instrumental way" (Sachs 2001: 2). Teachers who challenge authority are labelled "unprofessional" (Hoyle and John, 1995: 13).This conception promotes a competitive ethos rather than a collaborative one resulting in a return to teacher isolation and individualism. Managerialist professionalism promotes an *entrepreneurial identity* (Sachs, 1999: 3-6). Teachers prioritise what the bureaucracy rewards; teaching becomes narrow and lacks creativity, for example, through the enforced use of prescribed curriculum packages, teaching programmes (prescription of methodology) and technological resources. Apple (1989) and Shalem (1990) have called this loss of teachers' control over their work the "proletarianisation" of the teaching profession (cited in Wits EPU, 2005: 14).	"Inside-out" reforms did not create the autonomy *versus* accountability tension that arose from the "outside-in" reforms. However, because the balance between autonomy and accountability favours teacher autonomy and in the absence of any "outside-in" demands, the reform initiatives are at the mercy of the individual teacher's conception of professionalism. The degree of accountability implied in the notion of autonomy as understood in the teacher's conception of professionalism and whether the reform initiative accords with the teacher's professional beliefs and values impacts on the likelihood of the reform's sustainable implementation. To give effect to the principles of professionalism in the practice of teaching there would need to be greater regulation of teachers' preparation for practice. It needs to be more rigorously controlled to ensure the quality of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of qualified teachers. The "inside-out" reformers did not foreground achievement but rather humanistic aspects such as, 'human relations', 'process' and collective-decision-making. They were not in favour of objectively measuring improvement in achievement and linking this with strategies therefore there are few "empirically-validated findings" to contribute to school reform knowledge. The focus was on the teacher as a co-participant in management rather than an instructional agent (Muller and Roberts, 2000: 9-11). "Whole school" strategies were promoted while instruction was neglected (Reynolds and Stoll, 1996: 106). Muller and Roberts (2000) argue that individual school improvement, the focus of the "inside-out" approach, is by its nature not systemic improvement and therefore does not promote equity; it cannot improve the "aggregate performance across the span of schools in a schooling system" (p. 17).	The "new accountability" model, which assumes professional accountability is in place, is limited in its effectiveness when there are deficiencies of teacher and school capacity to bring about the changes necessary for improvement. For the merged paradigm of school improvement to yield results the external accountability demands need to be aligned with internal capacity to deliver. Fuhrman (1999 and 2003) emphasises that if the capacity to attain these clearly determined standards is not changed, this model cannot be successful even if the teachers and learners are motivated by the consequences of their performance, whether positive or negative. Fuhrman argues that insufficient attention is given to "teacher competencies and school conditions that affect the effort-to-achievement calculus" (1999: 9) and that, even if there are strong incentives, teachers are not able to "muster abilities they lacked ... Capacity does not magically appear" (2003: 4). Darling-Hammond (2004) emphasises that teachers need to be supported in order to help them develop capacity to deliver quality (p. 1050). In "Redesigning Accountability Systems of Education", a critique of "new accountability", Fuhrman (2003) argues that in practice the "new accountability" model is not a valid or fair model. She questions the validity on the basis of the adequacy and appropriateness of the tests used to measure student learning and whether they do not, in fact, measure other factors, for example, student background or teacher capacity to teach the knowledge and skills being measured (p. 4). She believes they are not fair for a number of reasons including the fact that one cannot allocate consequences to teachers if the scores are heavily influenced by factors other than quality of instruction or instructional effort (p. 5). She goes on to identify the effects of "new accountability" such as the narrowing of the curriculum, great variation in scores that generally reflect differences in capacity of teachers and schools and overall no positive effect on student achievement (pp. 6, 7). The demand/pressure to achieve improved performance levels has changed teachers' roles, how they work and the nature of their work. Briefly expressed they experience de-professionalization caused by work overload, job intensification and de-skilling (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Hargreaves, 2000; Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996). Elmore (2002a) criticises the manner in which the performance-based accountability system has developed in the United States. Originally it was a form of "horse trade" whereby states gave more flexibility to schools and districts to determine what and how to teach in return for more accountability for performance. However, in Elmore's opinion, the performance-based accountability system has come to mean "testing, and testing alone". He believes that as a test-based accountability model, the new system fails because it is built on an over-simplified view of what it takes to improve learning (ibid: 5). It does not pay sufficient attention to teachers' roles. Honig and Hatch (2004) argue for "coherence" when faced with the multiple of the externally motivated reform policies as well as the internally driven ones which all converge on the frontline workers, especially the teachers. The success of any of the reforms depends on the sense that the implementers make of the policies and how well they "fit a particular school's culture, political interests, aspirations, conceptions of professionalism and ongoing operations (p. 18). In Honig's opinion the shift from "outside-in" and "inside-out" to "new accountability" is a shift towards "coherence".

WITSEPU