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ABSTRACT For Doctoral Thesis by Carola Steinberg

Teachers' Emotions towards Assessment: What can be learned from taking the emotions seriously?

This doctoral thesis investigates a relatively under-researched aspect of teachers' emotions: namely, teachers' emotions towards assessment. It generates a conceptual framework and methodological tool for the investigation into and analysis of teachers' assessment practice, which consists of three concepts: emotions, emotional rules and emotional labour. Following Nussbaum (2001), emotions are viewed as cognitive, i.e. as evaluative judgements of objects important to a person's flourishing. Following Turner (2007, 2010), emotions are understood as a generalised symbolic medium exchanged between people within institutions, making positive emotions a desirable resource that enhance a person's flourishing. The thesis also draws on Hochschild (1983/2003), Zembylas (2005), Theodosius (2008) and Archer (2000), to expand, systematize and operationalize the concepts of emotional rules and labour, which increase the visibility of teachers' emotions and illustrate how assessment, like teaching, is an "emotional practice" (Hargreaves, 1998). This conceptual frame opens possibilities for further research into the nascent field of teachers' emotions and assessment.

Data was collected through seven focus group interviews with nineteen teachers. The teachers were selected as a purposive sample: committed to their work of enabling learner achievement, engaged in professional development and working in functional schools. A thick description of teachers' emotions foregrounded three main 'objects' of assessment: learner achievement, the assessment practices of marking and giving feedback, and accountability demands. Findings show the identity of committed teachers' as interdependent with learner achievement: teachers gain positive emotions and the motivation to continue their work when learners do well, but are disappointed and filled with self-doubt when learners do badly. In their assessment practice, committed teachers are often overwhelmed by endless marking, yet continuously strive to make judgements and give feedback in ways that are fair, just and empowering for learners. The "panic accountability" of departmental demands undermines and demeans teachers, generating outrage and alienation. Key claims arising from the research are: 1. Teachers' emotions occupy a strategic position as an inevitable filter through which all policy aimed at achieving the national project of high learner achievement must pass, so teachers' emotions towards assessment and accountability have the power to enhance or destabilise learner achievement and are thus a valid concern for educational research, policy and practice. 2. As seen through their emotional rules, committed teachers strive to live up to high ethical ideals and take responsibility not only for learner success but also learner failure. 3. Teachers' emotional labour makes visible how they strive to fulfil their moral purpose of learner achievement, yet are deeply demoralised by not receiving acknowledgement and respect from education authorities.

Keywords: Teachers' Emotions, Emotional Rules, Emotional Labour, Assessment, Accountability