

# **The real and the ideal**

**Field analysis of roles and competences of educators**

## **Final report**

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# Executive summary

## Research questions

Since 1997, four key policy documents on teacher education, training and development have been produced. These are:

COTEP Norms *and Standards* for Teacher Education  
SACE Code of Conduct

ELRC *Manual* for Developmental Appraisal  
NDOE *Duties and Responsibilities of Educators*  
Collectively, these documents define employer requirements, provide frameworks for professional development and appraisal, define professional conduct, and specify duties and responsibilities of educators.

In South Africa there is a dearth of knowledge about the details and texture of daily activity in schools and classrooms. There is thus a danger of policy development that takes place without a firm grounding in empirical school-based research. We accordingly posed three questions:

- 1 What does policy say that educators should be doing?
- 2 What are teachers actually doing?
- 3 What is the "fit" between policy and practice?

It was believed that the research would provide a view of:

- 1 the internal coherence (or tensions) in the construction of teacher roles and competences in the four policy documents;
- 2 consistencies (or inconsistencies) between policy and practice.

This grounded view of the interface between policy and practice had the potential to provide useful insights into:

- 1 methods of conducting research in this very challenging and complex area,
- 2 the design of programmes for teacher development.

## Research design

Research instruments were developed concurrently with the analysis of the four policy documents. The result was the utilisation of the 6 major roles adapted from the Norms and Standards document:

- 1 Mediator of Learning
- 2 Administrator
- 3 Pastoral Role
- 4 Designer of Learning Programmes
- 5 Lifelong Learner
- 6 Community and Citizen Role

Synthesis of indicators of these roles resulted in a total of 48 competences, expressed as active verbs which could be observed or inferred. The first 3 roles were seen as largely observable and listed on a Classroom Observation Schedule. The last three roles were listed on a Descriptive Matrix which was completed on the basis of inference and discussion with educators.

## Findings

In interpreting the findings, it is important to remember that the study was conducted in schools, and with teachers, that had been identified as effective.

## Policy

Our analysis of the four policy documents suggests that policy:

- is underpinned by liberal values
- adopts a consensus view of society
- views the teacher as an "extended" professional
- presents a democratic, developmental model of teacher accountability and policy implementation
- assumes that contexts in which policy will be implemented are homogeneous.

However, since policy resides in four different documents, it is fragmented. A consolidated view of policy would require that individuals interpret, analyse, and synthesise the four documents.

## The Policy/ Practice "fit":

At a general level, we conclude that:

- with respect to the teacher in the role of Mediator of Learning, the "fit" was good. Conceptually, there was thus a good "fit" in the Foundational and Practical competences. As "restricted" professionals, teachers mirrored in their practice most of the roles outlined in policy.
- The "fit" was least apparent in the Reflexive competence where policy expectations are that teachers function as Lifelong Learners and Designers of Learning Programmes.
- Policy assumptions about the context in which policy is to be implemented are problematic. Teacher roles were clearly affected very substantially by different school contexts. While differing levels of resourcing was a major factor, differing value systems appeared to be a crucial factor. Different value systems were evident at the levels of the individual teacher, the culture of the school, and community (although we also found the concept of community to be problematic). Some of the value systems we encountered were in accord with policy, others were not. These differences were manifested most clearly in disciplinary practices (in which regard schooling appears to be in a state of near crisis) and in broader beliefs about human rights issues, such as gender equality.

At an individual level, we argue that

- teacher effectiveness cannot be disaggregated into discrete roles
- effective teachers had "something extra" over and above competence in the defined roles, a classroom "presence" embodied in "achieved status" (Bernstein, 1996) which enabled them to exercise interpersonal control
- policy roles better capture the work of schools than of the individual teachers working in them.

## Major Implications

- The schooling system would be best served if a consolidated view of policy were provided, which clarified and operationalised key issues. It is also argued that these be presented in "teacher" discourse so that teachers recognise their tacit knowledge in policy pronouncements.
- Appraisal measures should be implemented in a flexible and holistic way in order to facilitate the developmental function of appraisal.
- Professional development should focus not only on skills and competences, but should be based on the ways in which teachers construct their own professional identities.
- Development and appraisal should be sited within a whole" school context.

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The Educators in those Schools that participated in the field work.

The Teacher Organisations.

## **The research team**

The project was led by Professor Ken Harley and co-ordinated by Howard Timm.

Other contributors fall into three groups: those who attended work-shops and contributed to the discussions of the four policy documents, the development of the instrument and discussions centred around the data collected (Lampies Cornelius, Themba Ndhlovu, Krishnavani Pillay, Mahomed Sader, Volker Wedekind and Sandile Zondi); those who, in addition to being involved in what has already been mentioned, were also involved in the field work (Dr Stella Kaabwe and Carol Thomson); and those who were involved in all of the above as well as the writing of the report (Professor Ken Harley, Fred Barasa, Carol Bertram, Elizabeth Mattson and Howard Timm).

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# Terms of Reference

This research was carried out on the basis of an agreement between the Joint Education Trust and the School of Education, Training and Development, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In terms of this agreement, the School of Education was to carry out a "Field Analysis of Roles and Competences of Post Level One Educators". The project was funded by DANIDA and managed by the Joint Education Trust.

The project commenced in June 1998 and the final report was to be submitted by the end of October 1998.

The rationale for the project was that while South African education had been studied extensively at the systemic and policy level, there was a dearth of knowledge about the details and texture of daily activity in schools and classrooms. There was thus a danger that policy development could occur without a firm grounding in empirical classroom and school-based research. Policy developed in this fashion would obviously run the risk of being so removed from the lived experiences of educators and learners that successful implementation became problematic.

The "Field Analysis of Roles and Competences of Post Level One Educators" was thus conceptualized as an exploration into the interface of policy and practice. More specifically, the purpose of the research was to examine the practices of educators within their specified areas of responsibility in schools that were recognized as being effective. Teacher practice was to be compared with the emerging definitions of teachers' roles and competences in order to interrogate these in terms of their applicability.

Post Level One teachers only were to be targeted for what was expected to be the first of a series of studies.

The study was to be divided into three distinct phases. **Phase one** was to involve an analysis of four recent policy documents defining educators' roles and competences, namely:

- *COTEP Norms and Standards for Teacher Education*<sup>1</sup>
- *SACE Code of Conduct*
- *ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal*
- *NDOE Duties and Responsibilities of Educators*

Documents were to be analysed for trends and converging themes as well as for inconsistencies.

Phase Two was to draw heavily on qualitative techniques in order to capture as detailed a picture as possible of the daily practices of educators. Qualitative methodology was to be employed at

<sup>1</sup>The document analysed in this study was entitled *Norms and Standards for Teacher Education*. It has since been renamed *Norms and Standards for Educators*.

this initial stage of understanding educators' practice, the belief being that lack of representativity associated with a qualitative approach would be compensated by the depth of the description.

The final descriptions of educators' roles and competences as captured in the field were to be discussed with the educators concerned in order to allow them to express their views on the accuracy of the findings.

The third phase was to involve matching the field analyses to the roles and competences as defined and represented by the various stakeholders.

Given the level of detail required by this study, it was envisaged that between six and eight schools in the greater Pietermaritzburg-Msunduzi area would be included in the sample. Schools would be selected to reflect a range of different contexts, but the key criterion for selection was that they would all be effectively functioning schools. Within the designated schools a sample of ten teachers was to be selected on the basis of their perceived competence.

It was envisaged that the outcome of the research could contribute to an assessment of the appropriateness of the descriptions of various competences and, further, that the final analysis could assist in identifying the training and capacity building activities necessary to enable educators to meet the levels of competence required

## How to read this report

When Pierre Bourdieu was once questioned about the degree to which his sociology provides a **fuzzy** picture of the social world, he answered that there was one tenet which he tried to **follow**. This one rule is "Do not be more clear than reality".

**(In Ladwig J.G. (1996) *Academic Distinctions* New York and London: Routledge)**

The "Executive Summary" placed at the beginning of this report is, by the very nature of such a summary, "more clear than reality". We hope it will be read as an introduction to - rather than as a substitute for - the Final Report.

The first chapter of this report explains the purpose of the research, as well as the methodology used, how the research instrument was developed, and how schools and teachers were selected. The second chapter is a detailed analysis of the following documents

- *COTEP Norms and Standards for Teacher Education*
- *SACE Code of Conduct*
- *ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal*
- *NDOE Duties and Responsibilities of Educators*

This chapter gives a brief description of each document, its purposes and perceived strengths and weaknesses of each.

The third chapter describes the context of each of the six secondary schools where research took place. This is seen to be important because a school's context and resources influence the way in which policy is understood and accepted. This chapter is followed by a number of photographs taken during the research.

The fourth chapter examines the data that were collected by researchers and draws out key themes which appear to emerge from the data. It discusses what the "fit" is between the competences prescribed by policy and the competences which were observed and inferred in the practice of effective teachers.

The fifth chapter draws out the essential characteristics of the policy model, examines the degree of "fit" between these essential characteristics and the themes emerging from practice. It then goes on to discuss the tensions and dissonances we have found at the interface of policy and practice.

The final chapter offers some tentative suggestions for the implementation of the policy. It is suggested that it may be helpful for teachers to encounter a coherent and comprehensive guide to policy; that we need to be wary of falling into a technician and atomistic implementation of the Appraisal; that teacher development should focus on developing the reflexive competences of teachers, and that individual teacher development needs to happen within a context of organisational school development. It ends with some recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 1

### Research aims and research design

#### 1.1 The area of research

"The 'New' South Africa reflects a dramatic shift ... to a new legal-organisational basis. ...The interdependence between people is based on contractual relations with an emphasis on the rights and duties of individual citizens and their contractual relation with the state" (Harley & Parker, forthcoming).

Up to this point in time, however, the work of educators has not been subject to formal regulation. In blunter terms, educators have had no job descriptions. This situation is an obvious anachronism in a society regulated by contractual relations. More seriously, perhaps, lack of job description would place the entire new educational edifice at risk. If the integration of education and training depends on qualifications making explicit what it is that qualified learners are able to do, there is a clear need to specify what educators should be able to do so as to make all of this possible.

Since 1997 a number of key policy documents have been produced. The most important of these are:

- *COTEP Norms and Standards for Teacher Education*
- *SACE Code of Conduct*
- *ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal*
- *NDOE Duties and Responsibilities of Educators*

Collectively these documents define employer requirements, provide frameworks for professional development and appraisal, define professional conduct, and specify duties and responsibilities. There is a demonstrable need for policy making of this kind to be followed by empirical investigations into the identities and practices, and roles and competences, of educators and learners in diverse contexts.

One of the key questions is that of the policy / practice relationship. Is there a fracture between policy and practice? Research evidence from many countries highlights the difficulty of putting policy into practice:

The evaluation of many World Bank policies has revealed a great discrepancy between their policies and what happens on the ground, especially in Africa (de Clercq, 1997; 129).

There are recent indications that disjunction between policy and practice is no less stark in South Africa. The failure of schools and the inadequacy of educators has been well documented in the CCOLTS project and the National Teacher Education Audit (1995-1996). However, the failure of practice to reflect the wishes (dreams?) of policy makers is not necessarily a case of educator culpability. A different view of the policy/ practice problem is that if "... one concludes that

almost all people in a particular role are inadequate, should one not rather ask what there is about the system that makes or sustains such failures in performance?" (Sarason, 1991:15).

While interrogating "the system" rather than blaming teachers for policy failure is an interesting approach in our project we explore the interface of policy and practice by focusing on Post Level One educators who are successful, and we compare their practices and competences with those outlined in policy documents. In this sense, our study is similar to Christie's (1997) work on 'resilient schools'. which focused on schools that were succeeding while those around them were not.

## **1.2 Research aims**

Specific aims of the present project were

(a) to construct a unified, consolidated image of educator roles and competences specified in existing policy documents (ie. *What does policy say that educators should be doing?*)

(b) to construct a representation of the roles and competences being demonstrated in the practice of successful educators (ie. *What are successful educators actually doing?*) (c) to map practice onto policy (ie. *What is the "fit" between policy and practice?*).

Practical benefits of the research for policy development could be twofold. The research could provide a view of:

(a) the internal coherence (or tensions) in the construction of teacher roles and competences in the policy documents listed above;

(b) consistencies (or inconsistencies) between policy and practice.

Being limited in scope, the research could not hope to produce definitive results. However, as a grounded view of the interface between policy and practice, it had the potential to provide useful insights into:

(a) methods of conducting research in this very challenging and complex area;

(b) the design of programmes for teacher development.

For these two benefits to materialize, it was recognized at the outset that further research would need to be undertaken.

## **1.3 Research design**

### **1.3.1 insights from the literature**

An unusual feature of our research is that it was not influenced by key concepts drawn from the literature.

There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, there is as yet no serious tradition of classroom-

based research in South Africa. For example, in commenting on the crisis in education and the need for research to be sensitive to conditions in schools, Jansen (1996) notes that:

The single most important reason for this crisis is the distance of politicians, policy-makers and bureaucrats from the schools: they simply do not know what is happening inside our schools and classrooms ... (Jansen, 1996).

It has to be said that, until recently, academic researchers have not contributed much in this regard. Wickham's (1997) doctoral thesis makes a valuable exception.

The second reason for our research having not been directly informed by the literature is that while there are many studies that have *some* relevance to the present project, there is almost nothing (as far as we have been able to establish) with the same focus and ambitious scope as the present study which traverses policy and practice, and macro and micro worlds! At different points of the research (eg. research design, analysis, interpretation) we accordingly found it necessary to draw on a wide range of diverse studies in education.

Here is a very brief indication of the way in which reported studies in the existing literature in fact focus on only a *limited* aspect of teachers' work in relation to employer/ professional expectations:

- *Measuring the amount of work teachers do:* The ex-Natal Education Department conducted a comprehensive study into Teacher Workloads in 1991. The aim was to measure workload, and to draw comparisons (both qualitative and quantitative) between the demands of different subject areas. This study has influenced other work, such as the recent APEK investigation into Workloads. One may infer a relatively narrow purpose in the APEK research too!
- *Describing the work that teachers do:* Writers such as Hilsum (1972; 1978) and Strong (1978) have produced detailed and interesting descriptive accounts of the teacher's day.
- *Defining the quality of the work teachers do:* In an extensive review of research in the UK, Troman (1996) concludes that definitions of the 'good' teacher are social constructions that are subject to change at different historical moments. It is interesting to note how subject-based and technicist such definitions have become since the advent of the subject-based British National Curriculum. For example, OFSTED (1993) established criteria such as "clear objectives for lessons" and "teachers have a secure command of their subject". None of this work appears to link the work of the teacher with the very broad roles that will be described presently in the South African documentation, where educator roles are linked to pastoral care and social imperatives in addition to the narrower 'academic' focus.
- *Defining the work done by teachers in specific learning areas:* Friend and McNutt (1987) link job performance with job description, but as is standard practice, limit their focus - in this case, to the adequacy of resource provision for disabled students.

Research using rating scales for teachers has similar limitations but it also (very usefully) reflects some of the dangers of a purely quantitative research approach. In fact, some of the rating scales strike us as being so limited as to be downright crass. For example, Johnson (1992) uses only five indicators to measure teacher effectiveness, e.g: "Minimises transition time"; "begins work promptly and avoids wasting time toward end of class" (1992: 142). By comparison, even the well-known and much criticised Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) appear sophisticated and expansive (see Flanders, 1970; Delamont, 1976; Walker and Adelman, 1993). The work which we found most useful for informing methodology, as well as for triangulating data, was that of Christie (1997) and Christie and Potterton (1997). As will be seen presently, there is a good deal of resonance between their work and ours.

### **9.3.2 Theoretical issues, and methodology**

From the outset it was believed that a qualitative research approach would be most appropriate (see Terms of Reference). Nevertheless, it was originally envisaged that some use would also be made of quantitative observation schedules based on checklists. Categorising, recording and counting events is a neat, easy way of conducting research, and the results are likely to impress readers as being "scientific" and "objective". However, the more we worked with policy documents and explored ways of checklisting, the less feasible a formal statistical approach became. Amongst the conceptual and pragmatic reasons for the exclusion of formal statistical approaches, and greater reliance on qualitative methodology, were the following:

- It is impossible to capture through observation the entire universe of teacher roles. Much of an educator's work is hidden, ie it is done after hours; and many roles and competences may not be evident in the single week during which the research took place. This point is especially relevant in the present case, where the teacher's role is one of "extended professionalism" (Broadfoot, 1988). Had policy cast the educator into a mould of "restricted professionalism", being limited to formal instruction, statistical "checklist" approaches would have been much more workable.
- The literature contains salutary warnings of the inability of outsiders to penetrate the ethos, understandings and shared meanings that educators and learners build up over a period of time. Some of the interactionist literature provides convincing evidence of the way in which outsiders may completely misconstrue classroom events (see, for example, Delamont, 1976; Walker and Adelman, 1993). "Objectively" coding events may be dangerously misleading if the researcher's interpretations are based on a misunderstanding of what is really happening.
- At a purely pragmatic and human level, schools and educators would be unlikely to accept a situation in which researchers "shadowed" them every moment of the day while recording events on checklists. Sinister connotations would adhere to such practice, and

these would in all likelihood engender devious behaviour and avoidance strategies on the part of educators.

The key principle *informing* methodology was that of observing as much as possible in schools and working *with* educators in an attempt to *understand, illuminate and explain* their practice in relation to the 6 roles identified and outlined in the research instrument (see Appendix A and B). In turn this meant recasting the educator as a "co-researcher" rather than as a "subject". Rapport and trust between educator and fieldworker were identified as essential preconditions for successful fieldwork. It was therefore vital that fieldworkers and educators should meet before the fieldwork commenced. In addition to practical details, the purpose of these meetings was to discuss and clarify respective roles and mutual expectations. Main points to be impressed on educator/ co-researchers were:

- The exercise was NOT linked to appraisal. Educators were told that it was *accepted that they were effective and successful*. Indeed, this was precisely why they had been selected for involvement in the research in the first place. Fieldworkers were interested in what educators did to make them effective.
- The aim was to capture, illuminate and explain the teacher's practice *in general* rather than the educator's practice as it occurred in that specific week only. The specific week was to be used as a vehicle for developing insights which would hopefully lead to coverage of the educator in relation to the 6 broad roles outlined in the research instrument (Appendix B).
- It followed that we wished to involve educators as co-researchers. We wanted to observe their practice, but very importantly also confirm our perceptions in discussion with them, and indeed ask directly when we did not understand.
- Confidentiality was assured. Educator/ co-researchers were assured that reports would not include names.

It was intended that fieldworkers should go to schools and classrooms in an open-minded way that would allow insights to emerge in a grounded way (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The most general assumption taken into the field was that although we accepted that the educator/ co-researchers were "effective", we did not assume that they would necessarily reflect *all* of the teacher roles and competences constructed by policy. We had been reminded that: "The ways I know teaching are not ... reflected in the policies and structures that affect my work" (Webb, 1996: 300). Furthermore, since a substantial body of research has confirmed Keddie's (1971) disjunction between what educators believe as educationists ("the educationist context") and what they actually do in practice ("the teacher context"), there was every reason for fieldworkers to be alert to the possibility of disjunction between policy and practice.

### **1.3.3 Data collection** Fieldwork was to include:

- at least two full days of observation in the form of "shadowing" to gain an impression of a full educator's day; and
- three days of observation interspersed with discussions on understanding practice, and confirming and clarifying perceptions.

In so far as possible, the 5 days of fieldwork were to be consecutive, but it was recognized that allowance would have to be made for the kinds of changes in schedule that do sometimes occur in schools. It was also recognized that fieldworkers might need to "take time out" for reflection on data (it was envisaged that analysis would be formative as well as summative).

"Follow up" work included:

- one final visit/ interview with the educator to confirm the overall representation that the fieldworker had constructed; and
- a final courtesy report back to the staff as a whole, should the school request this. This would cover the findings of the project as a whole, and would not deal with data on particular schools or educators except in so far as anonymous illustrative examples might be offered.

### **1.3.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis was to be formative and summative, with triangulated procedures built into the process. Specific features were:

(a) Shared understandings as a basis for data analysis:

- Fieldworkers were involved in a series of workshops at which they contributed to the conceptualisation and planning of the project. The groundwork for data analysis was thus built up through the development of shared understandings at workshops throughout the process (see Appendix F).

(b) Formative analysis:

- Fieldworkers developed/ confirmed impressions through observation and informal discussion with educators in the field; and
- Fieldworkers were to begin constructing a tentative global representation of the educator's practice while still in the field.

(c) Summative analysis:

- Individual fieldworkers collated their Observation Schedules and Descriptive Matrices (see Appendix B) and their informal notes in producing one summative Schedule and Matrix;
- Fieldworkers conducted follow-up interviews with educators so as to confirm/ modify

their tentative global representations of educator practice;

- Fieldworkers presented their global representations at a workshop held in the School of Education. The research team compared documents and looked for similarities and differences in the data. Through a process of progressive focusing a composite representation of educator practice was constructed (see Appendix J);
- It was intended that one member of the research team was to visit as many research sites as possible so as to have an overview of the entire operation and a comparative view of practices and problems in each of the sites.<sup>2</sup> These insights were fed into the summative analysis.

#### 1.4 Research instruments

Research instruments were developed concurrently with the policy analysis (see Chapter 2). In part this was done to ensure consistency; but in any event, the constraint of time allowed no alternative. The process that was followed is outlined in Appendix A.

The result was utilisation of the 6 major roles proposed in the draft *Norms and Standards* document, these being:

- Mediator of learning
- Administrator
- Pastoral care
- Designer of learning programmes
- Lifelong learner
- Community and citizen role

Synthesis of indicators of these roles resulted in a total of 48 competences. expressed as active verbs which could be observed or inferred.

The next task was to devise a way of operationalising the 6 roles and 48 competences.

**1.4.1 Operationalising the roles: how the data were to be captured** Decisions were made on the basis of the following useful statement

"As a minimum, each job description should include components relating to *planning*, *interactive* and *review* phases of teaching" (Marsh, 1993: 66).

It was apparent from these three dimensions that in the classroom only the *interactive* roles are observable; *planning* and *review* are largely invisible and inscrutable even to an observer familiar with the ethos and collective understandings of a particular classroom. On this basis we

<sup>2</sup>in the event constraints of time allowed for visits to only 3 of the 6 schools.

classified the 6 roles into 2 categories, namely the (mainly) *visible* roles, and the (mainly) *invisible* roles. This produced the following categories:

Mainly visible roles	Mainly invisible roles
Mediator of learning	Designer of learning programmes
Administrator	Lifelong learner
Pastoral care	Community and citizen role

Conceptual division of the 6 roles into these 2 categories on the basis of visibility and invisibility led to further conclusions about operationalisation. These are depicted in the following table:

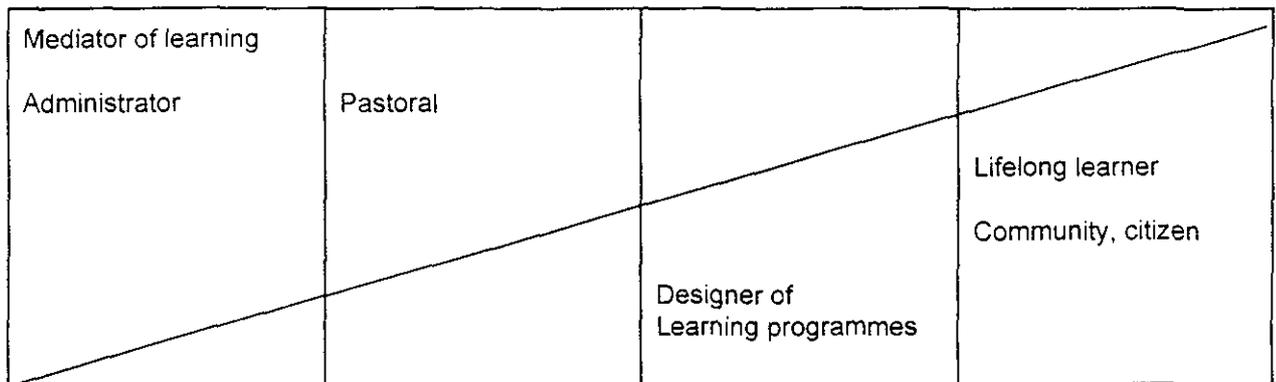
### Visible and Invisible Roles

<b>(Mainly) Visible Roles evident in <i>Interaction</i> in the classroom: Mediator of learning; Pastoral role; Administrator</b>	<b>(Mainly) Invisible Roles in the <i>Planning and Review</i> phases: Designer of learning programmes; Lifelong learner; Community &amp; citizen role</b>
The (predominantly) observable events in the classroom	May have some observable manifestations in the classroom, but are rooted in educators' knowledge, skills and values
These roles are non-negotiable: they are the essence of the teacher's responsibility, and may be classified as "ends"	These may be regarded as "means". The resources that educators draw on are located in these domains. While educators have to fulfil these roles, they may do so in different ways, and different kinds of thinking may lie behind decisions they make.
These roles are best - but not exclusively - reflected in the <i>Norms and Standards</i> <b>practical</b> competences	These roles are best - but not exclusively - reflected in the <i>Norms and Standards</i> <b>foundational</b> and <b>reflexive</b> competences
Data are more amenable to quantification, checklist-type collection by means of observation	Qualitative data are gathered by induction through observation and verification involving further observation and discussion with educators

A feature of the process of synthesising and conflating the policy documents' roles into a useable set of categories nested within the 6 major roles was the realization that categories were not mutually exclusive, and that in practice there would be fluidity and overlap. A further difficulty for fieldworkers was that while 3 of the major roles had been defined as "mainly" visible and observable in the *interactive* domain of the teacher's work, the other 3 in the *planning* and *review* domains were described as "mainly" invisible, and, therefore, more amenable to inference than to observation. In an attempt to capture and clarify the notion of "mainly" in a way that illustrated the proportional relation between observation and inference with respect to each of the 6 roles, the expected relationship was depicted in the following diagram:

**Relation between the Visible (observed) roles, and the Invisible (or inferred) roles**

**VISIBLE**



**INVISIBLE**

On the basis of the policy analysis (Chapter 2), as well as consideration of ways of operationalising the analysis, two schedules were developed for use in the field:

- the Classroom Observation Schedule
- the Descriptive Matrix (both in Appendix B)

It was recognized that the process of recording on the Schedule and Matrix would not be a linear one - indeed it was undesirable that it should be linear. In the true sense of the word, fieldworkers would be functioning as researchers: making observations, forming tentative hypotheses (or hunches), developing these into inferences, and confirming or disconfirming these through further observation and discussion with the educator /co-researcher.

**1.4.2 The Classroom Observation Schedule**

It will be noted that the Observation Schedule includes a Likert scale (1, 2 or 3) as a way of capturing relative emphasis.<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that a "low" score would not indicate deficiency on the part of the educator. It would simply mean that a particular category might not have been important or appropriate in a particular set of circumstances, or that the educator

<sup>3</sup> In piloting the Schedule the more conventional 5 point scale was used and found to be unsuitable. On the basis of the available evidence, fieldworkers did not find it possible to categorise competences other than in broad ways. The 5point scale was too fine grained for practical purposes.

achieved effectiveness by meeting a specific need through reliance on another competence which on the Schedule would be reflected in a different category.<sup>4</sup>

Fieldworkers were left to decide on the number of Schedules they would use (ie. one per lesson, or one per day etc. this being a matter of personal preference and governed also by the spatial arrangements and opportunities for writing in the classroom). Consolidation of key themes and features emerging from the individual sheets was left to the discretion of field workers.

### **1.4.3 The Descriptive Matrix for inferred (invisible) competences**

While observable instances might be apparent, this Matrix was completed on the basis of inference and discussion with educators. Its greatest use was thus likely to occur after classroom observation (eg. during breaks, or after school). It was to be completed and modified on a fairly continuous basis, with progressive focusing leading to the formulation of more or less distinct competences.

The aim was to arrive at succinct description of the knowledge, skills and values the educator brought to each of the categories:

- Designer of Learning Programmes,
- Lifelong Learner, and
- Community / Citizen role.

The post-fieldwork interview with the educator was to serve as final verification of the descriptions.

The greatest strength (or weakness) with research instruments of this kind lies in the quality of the fieldworkers. It has already been mentioned that field workers in the present research had been involved in the project from the outset. For further comment on the field workers and their preparation for the project, see Appendix F.

## **1.5 Criteria for selection of schools and profile of the case study schools selected**

### **1.5.1 Criteria for selection**

The process of negotiating access to schools necessitated cession of control over the selection criteria. In the light of our discussions with KZNDEC officials, our original criteria had to be modified.

<sup>4</sup> Aspects of the instrument such as these would need to be explained to teacher/co-researchers who might feel threatened or demeaned by a "low" score.

(a) The criteria as originally planned

For operationalising the concept of an "effective" school, we relied on the concept of a "resilient" school utilized by Pam Christie (1997). "Resilience" is a cognate concept to stability - it describes schools that are able to cope and develop in the face of adversity. It refers to the inner resources of schools. and as described by Christie, has the following features:

- a sense of agency and responsibility
- flexible and purposive leadership
- a focus on learning and teaching as the central activities of the school
- a safe and organizationally functioning institutional environment
- consistent disciplinary practices anchored in educational purposes and personal interaction
- a culture of concern within the school (1997: 4).

Matriculation results were accepted as a rough but workable index of the criteria. Whether justified or not, there is usually a clear public consensus about which are the "good" schools, so it was further agreed that schools selected would also have to enjoy general public recognition as being "good" schools.

To ensure representivity, the selection was to be limited to co-educational, public schools. If a school had a boarding establishment, it was not to be dominant feature of the school. In addition, it was hoped that the sample of schools would include those from the range of "ex-Departments".

(b) The modified criteria

As a result of the process of selecting schools (outlined in 1.5.2), the criteria were modified by viewing effectiveness and resilience in a *relative* sense. In other words, "disadvantaged" schools were not excluded from consideration if they were regarded as effective and resilient within their own particular communities and settings.

The process of gaining access to schools is outlined in **Appendix C**.

### **1.5.2 Selection of schools**

At an early stage KZNDEC officials expressed doubts as to whether any sort of sample was possible with the selection criteria originally proposed.<sup>5</sup> Prior to a crucial meeting with Senior Education Managers, our fear was that we might be refused access to schools. On the contrary, officials were so keen for research to take place in their schools that the problem became one of excluding schools. The point that this was a pilot project, and that the Project Proposal had specified 6 - 8 schools in PMB-Umsindusi area, made no impression. Nor did the argument that schools would not be disadvantaged by non-participation. In the face of insistence on the part of gatekeepers, the research team had little option but to assent to the selection of schools "given" to

<sup>5</sup> In fact one official went so far as to say that "resilience" excluded all but two schools in the region: and that those two "resilient" schools would be excluded by our insistence on schools with a co-educational character.

it.<sup>6</sup> In the final analysis, however, the research team had reason to be very grateful for the insistence that "disadvantaged" schools be included in the sample. The diversity of schools in the sample added an invaluable richness to the fieldwork.

The final selection of schools and their characteristics is reflected in the table below. (Fictitious names of schools are used in this table and in ensuing discussion.)

### Schools in the sample

Name of school	Situation	Number of educators participating in fieldwork
Arum High School	Urban: close to PMB city centre	2 educators
Aster High School	Peri-urban township: ± 18 km from PMB centre	2 educators
Dahlia Secondary School	Rural: ± 90 km from PMB	2 educators
Erica Secondary School	Urban: ± 6 km from city centre	1 educator
Marguerite Secondary School	Rural: ± 24 km from PMB centre	2 educators
Salvia Secondary School	Urban: close to PMB city centre	1 educator

## 1.6 Selection of educators as co-researchers<sup>7</sup>

### 1.6.1 Criteria for selection of educators

The research plan invoked the criterion of "effectiveness" in the educator/co-researcher. In itself, of course, "effectiveness" requires elaboration. This is not easy to provide: "There is no unequivocal research evidence on what 'effective teaching' really means" (Marsh, 1993: 66). The research team defined "effective teaching" in terms of:

- recognition by the school community as "good"
- good examination results
- contribution to the school being "resilient"

<sup>6</sup> The potentially awkward implication for the budget was somewhat mitigated by the arrangement that 2 fieldworkers would be stationed in the outlying schools, making shared travel possible.

<sup>7</sup> Typically, researchers "do" research on subjects, and use of the term "subjects" would be inappropriate here.

- willingness to participate in the project - as an educator and co-researcher.

As with schools, there is a popular public conception of what and who is "good". Criteria accordingly stipulated that individuals selected should enjoy suitable recognition in the broader school community.

### **1.6.2 Selection of educators**

If processes of access ceded a measure of control to KZNDEC officials, the process of selecting educators as co-researchers did the same - but to an even greater degree - to individual schools. The fact that selection had to be negotiated at the level of individual schools meant that standard practices could not be followed. It is important to recognise that here the research team was entirely in the hands of the principal and educators. The process of selection had to be consistent with school ethos and practices. The principal alone could not be asked to nominate "good" educators as this would have run the risk - probably the certainty - of staff drawing conclusions about "favourites". prospects for promotions, and so on. In short, if selection processes were not to become divisive, they would have to be controlled by individual schools. In any event, given the time constraints, the research team had no opportunity for negotiating staff selection (see Appendices G, H and I for communications with field workers and for documents which field workers could use when clarifying issues with principals)

The result was a very unfortunate lack of gender representivity in the sample - only three of the ten educators in the sample were women.

### **1.7 Some comments on fieldwork in schools and classrooms**

The organization of empirical fieldwork, particularly of a qualitative nature, poses two particular challenges to a researcher: (a) gaining access to the field, and (b) leaving the field (eg. see Schurink, 1988). Our research highlighted some of the difficulties around these two issues.

#### **(a) Gaining access to the field**

Classroom research, always problematic in terms of access, has a particular set of dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa. Past political struggles in some of the "ex-Departments" has left an inheritance of access to classrooms being suspect or downright illegitimate. At the school level, then, there are sensitivities which complicate research. At the same time, permission to approach principals at departmental level has become more complex. The locus of control over permission to conduct research in schools has become more diffuse within the bureaucracy. In our research, for example, we found it necessary to negotiate access at various levels of the bureaucracy: the Regional Chief Director, Chief Education Specialists, and Senior Education Managers. (In the latter case a team of 4 researchers met with 25 SEMs for the Pietermaritzburg and Midlands districts. Had we not had in our team a skilled facilitator with the right political legitimacy, our

project could have foundered.) Moreover, the permission and support of unions was necessary. Here too, we were fortunate as the path was cleared by one of the senior KZNED officials. As matters turned out, both KZNDEC and unions were remarkably helpful. (See Appendix C, D and E for documentation of our assistance from the KZNDEC.)

Once in the field (in this case, in schools) one expects to encounter a healthy cynicism about research. This is particularly true of individuals who had already been "researched". The acquisition of higher degrees is frequently associated with research activity. We made a point of noting that nobody in the project was doing this research for degree purposes. "But what good came of this research?" is a fair question that we were indeed asked. Explaining potential / possible benefits of research presents ethical difficulties. Who really knows? In general, we tried to present a realistic view of the possible benefits of this particular research, suggesting that it was a good opportunity for practitioners to "speak to policy makers". (See Appendix D, H and I.) Negotiating the "gatekeepers" and gaining access is greatly facilitated by personal networks and luck! Without these, research schedules and deadlines (and possibly budgets) may be thrown into disarray.

(b) "Leaving the field"

"Leaving the field" poses practical and ethical difficulties. Our experience was that schools have powerful expectations. It is also not unreasonable for schools to expect some sort of a "payback" for their willingness to participate in research activity. In our case it had already been decided that schools should be offered reportbacks if they so wished. In some settings, however, it is easy for schools to believe that the research team or its host university department might have expertise to offer and that an ongoing partnership might be appropriate. While encouraging, these kinds of expectations might simply be beyond the capacity of departments to offer.

A "payback" of a more literal kind was expected by one educator who enquired about the amount he was to be paid for participating as a "co-researcher". This attitude was exceptional, however, as the other educators participated generously and openly.

## Chapter 2

### Policy: The roles of educators

#### 2.1 Background to the four policy documents: origins, functions and relationships

This chapter examines the four policy documents which define educators' roles and competences. Here we describe and analyse each document, identify trends and inconsistencies within and amongst them, and attempt to identify converging themes.

The table below presents a summary of the origins and functions of the four documents:

#### A diagrammatic summary of the four documents

Document	Date	Developed by	Function
<i>COTEP Norms and Standards for Teacher Education</i>	mid 1998 (Final Draft)	Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP)  Revised by Technical Committee  For the National Department of Education (NDOE)	To define employer requirements, including evaluation of qualifications, for the NDOE as employer of all educators in public institutions  To provide a system for the professional development of educators
According to the introduction to the COTEP document, 'The revised Norms and Standards should be consistent with national policy and legislation; and they should represent a crystallisation of agreements among stakeholders with respect to standards and qualifications for teacher education.' The above document therefore 'accommodates the diverse requirements of the three documents below:			
<i>SACE Code of Conduct</i>	late 1997	South African Council for Educators (SACE) and Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)	To regulate the ethical conduct and professional discipline of all educators registered with SACE
<i>ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal</i>	late 1997	Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU)  For the Education Labour Relations Council	To establish appraisal procedures, criteria and instruments for all levels of educators
<i>NDOE Duties and Responsibilities of Educators</i>	expected to be declared policy at end of 1998	National Department of Education (NDOE)	To outline the duties and responsibilities of educators at each post level; to provide a job description against which an educator may be legally appointed, promoted and appraised.

### **2.1.1 Key points in viewing the policy documents**

In our analysis, a few key points emerged as useful ways of viewing the documents:

***The COTEP Norms and Standards document provides a synthesis of the roles and applied competences outlined by the other documents.***

The *COTEP Norms and Standards for Educators* draws together the recommendations of all the other three documents and is therefore the most inclusive and comprehensive. It employs, and attempts to operationalise, the concepts of roles and competences central to each of the other documents.

***The documents should be viewed in terms of employer-employee relations.***

According to Professor Ben Parker, Chair of the Technical Committee which drew up the revised *Norms and Standards* document, the most useful way to view these documents is in terms of employer-employee relations. This is in line with the Educators' Employment Act (1994) which recognises the National Department of Education (NDOE) as the legal employer of all educators in public schools. Accordingly, the four policy documents can be seen as outlining the state's system of employee regulation with a view to promoting the professional development of educators.

***The documents should be viewed in the context of the National Qualifications Framework.***

The regulatory and developmental system created by the four policy documents forms part of the grading system established by the NQF. The 1995 South African Quality Assurance Act (which set up SAQA to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF) arose out of recommendations from organised labour and business that an NQF should be put in place which provides a simple, transparent grading system with guidelines on qualifications, grades, job descriptions and pay scales, and which facilitates easy access, mobility and progression along any education and training path. As a grading and training system, the NQF serves as "a foundation for developing job descriptions; workload descriptions; performance, promotion and management criteria; salaries; wages and conditions of service" (*COTEP Norms and Standards*, 1998). The four documents under analysis contribute to an holistic model for developing professional educators, a model in which academic, occupational and professional requirements are closely articulated by their descriptions as "qualifications" on the NQF. The unit standards and qualifications registered on the NQF and the associated processes of registration and quality assurance of providers and programmes become the "currency" or "language" in which professional and occupational practices (job descriptions) are linked to academic programmes. The Minister of Education uses employer requirements to directly influence the programmes leading to qualifications on the NQF that meet the criteria for the evaluation of qualifications.

***The notion of applied competences is central to each of the documents and conceptually unites them.***

Although the documents all have quite distinct functions, what unites them into an holistic system of professional development is the common understanding and use of the notion of applied competence. This common understanding is the result of a great deal of debate within the Education, Training and Development Practices Project (ETDPP), established by the Ministry of Labour, the National Training Board and the GTZ, in 1996 and 1997. By the end of 1997, the ETDPP had reached consensus in rejecting a behaviourist, technicist approach to outcomes (an approach inherited from the training model which views skills as observable performances which may be measured in unit standards) and embraced a more complex, holistic view of outcomes as the competence to perform rather than the performance itself, with the understanding that the teaching and acquisition of such competence requires the integration of knowledge, skills and values.

***The four documents should be seen as serving symbolic, procedural and regulative policy functions.***

Francine de Clercq (1997) makes useful distinctions between the different purposes of policies:

There are substantive policies which reflect what the government should do, and procedural policies which spell out who is going to take action and through which mechanisms. Material policies provide real resources to some interest groups, whereas symbolic policies remain more rhetorical about needed changes. Regulative policies limit the behaviour and actions of groups and individuals, whereas redistributive policies shift the allocation of resources or rights among social groups (p 128).

It is our view that the policy documents under analysis primarily serve symbolic, procedural and regulative functions. The symbolic nature of the documents lies in their shared vision of the kind of educators being developed - a vision which at times remains purely rhetorical and difficult, or impossible, to ensure through procedures and regulations (e.g. how does one ensure that educators "exercise authority with compassion" or even that all educators have a common understanding of what this means?). The regulative function of the documents lies in the legal control they establish over the teaching profession: it is now law that educators have to be registered to a professional body, have to meet the requirements of a clearly defined job description, have to adhere to a code of conduct, and have to participate in regular appraisal procedures. The procedural function of the documents is clear in the structures and processes they spell out for the implementation of each of the policies.

## Summary of the symbolic, regulative and procedural functions of each of the documents

	symbolic	regulative	procedural
<i>COTEP Norms and Standards for Teacher Education</i>	defines roles and competences of an effective educator as a self-directed professional with practical, foundational and reflexive competences	defines employer requirements and norms and standards for evaluation of qualifications for the NDOE	outlines processes of quality assurance of providers and programmes for teacher education
<i>SACE Code of Conduct</i>	defines and promotes the ethical conduct of an educator as one who upholds the view of human rights embodied in the Constitution	determines criteria for entry into the education profession; regulates the ethical conduct of professionals	outlines the registration procedures and disciplinary mechanisms of SACE
<i>ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal</i>	defines roles and competences (core criteria) of effective educators; encourages reflective practice, professional development and accountability	sets in place a nationally unified system of appraisal to be followed in all schools	outlines structures and procedures of appraisal systems within schools
<i>NDOE Duties and Responsibilities of Educators</i>	defines day-to-day duties and responsibilities of educators, assuming the roles and competences outlined in the above documents	provides job descriptions against which educators can be legally appointed, promoted and appraised	outlines duties and responsibilities of different post levels, thereby clarifying who should be doing what within a school

## 2.2 Description and analysis of each document

For those unfamiliar with the origins and functions of the documents, a brief description and analysis of each document follows:

### 2.2.1 COTEP Norms and Standards for Teacher Education

In September 1997, the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (appointed by the national Department of Education) appointed a Technical Committee to revise the interim *Norms and Standards for Teacher Education* issued in 1996.

The Introduction to the COTEP document lists the following purposes:

To indicate how norms or requirements for educators can be articulated to meet: the occupational criteria for employment by the DOE; the professional criteria for registration by SACE; and the academic criteria, or standards, for qualifications to be registered on the NQF.

This report is primarily interested in the articulation of the first two sets of criteria: the occupational and professional criteria for employment by the DOE and registration by SACE - in other words, how the Department has constructed the roles and competences of the ideal educator.

According to Professor Ben Parker, the Technical Committee relied heavily on the years of research and consultation that had gone into the development of the ELRC *Appraisal Manual*, the SACE *Code of Conduct* and the Education Training and Development Practice Project description of roles and competences (devised in May 1997 and incorporated into the COTEP document). For this reason, the COTEP document can be seen as an integrated synthesis of the policy principles contained in the other documents. Our analysis of the documents bears out this perception, in that there is a general consistency in the principles, concepts and language of the four documents, and the COTEP document is the most comprehensive and inclusive of the four. In our view, it is the most useful document for developing a research instrument which captures and summarises the roles and competences expected of educators at Post Level One.

(a) **Strengths of the *COTEP Norms and Standards* document**

***Provides for quality assurance while allowing flexibility***

By defining norms and standards for teacher education, COTEP introduces the important concept of quality assurance of providers and programmes. The Committee recognises the number of providers and contextual diversities in educational development and practice nationally. Thus, it defines the roles that higher education providers must prepare educators to play so that they can perform their jobs competently, rather than prescribe the curriculum content or pedagogical processes to be adopted. Accordingly, the proposed quality assurance processes have in-built mechanisms that allow programme designs to be flexible and respond to contextual needs. This is in line with the increasing evidence that the effectiveness of organisational structures and programmes is dependent on their dynamic, contextual sensitivity (Raynolds, 1994).

***Presents an holistic view of the educator as someone with a range of competences***

The COTEP document conceptualises an educator holistically: as a self-directed professional; an individual well endowed with practical, foundational and reflexive competences who is able not only to consider a range of possibilities for action, make decisions about which possibility to follow, and perform the chosen act competently, but also demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and thinking which underpins the actions taken, and reflect on the actions with a view to adaptation. Evidently, this suggests a shift from the previous atomistic view of an educator: where s/he was perceived as a technician, whose major role was to take plans and instructions in form of syllabi and implement the same through the application of specific skills, without any reflection on actions taken.

### ***Emphasises democratic principles***

In line with the constitution, the educator roles and competences as defined in the COTEP document, reflect a consistent and considerable emphasis on the application of democratic principles and values in all aspects of educational practice. As a mediator of learning, for instance, the educator is expected to create a democratic, but disciplined atmosphere, where learners are actively involved in the learning process, while the educator's pastoral role requires him/her to respect the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners while at the same time striving to promote gender equality.

### ***Advocates the integration of theory and practice in professional development***

The COTEP document distinguishes between qualifications and applied competence, thereby advocating a system which integrates theory and practice. Specifically, the document argues that "it is important to emphasise that a qualification is not a competence". Qualifications must be acquired, but the applied competence must be demonstrated. In the envisaged system, which distinguishes between qualifications and applied competences and seeks to integrate the two, the employment of an educator in a given educational role or his/her appointment to a given post level would be dependent on his/her ability to demonstrate that s/he has the applied competence as signified by the appropriate qualifications. This requirement will have a significant positive impact on the teaching practice: it will reinforce the educator's role as a scholar and life-long learner, by closing doors for promotions on those educators who have not acquired higher academic and professional qualifications. or have accumulated qualifications but done little to nurture the practical competences signified by such qualifications.

### **(b) Weaknesses of the COTEP Norms and Standards**

#### ***Assumes that competences define and operationalise the roles they describe***

The major assumption throughout the document seems to be that competences define and operationalise the roles. This is a problematic assumption as it allows subjective interpretations of key concepts as well as the unnecessary overlap and subsequent shadowing of certain roles. The illustrative point is how the document conceives, categorises and operationalises the educator's role as a leader/ administrator/ manager, or as a scholar/ researcher/ lifelong learner. In the former case, for instance, the listing of practical, foundational and reflexive competences associated with this role fails to distinguish between leadership, administration and management as roles and in fact tends to shadow the leadership component.

### ***Adopts an exclusive definition of the term 'educator'***

The second major weakness of the COTEP document relates to what may be termed as internal inconsistency. While the document develops an all-inclusive system of norms and standards for teacher education, training and development, it adopts the exclusive definition of the term *educator* (as stipulated in the Employment of Educator's Bill, 1994). As quoted elsewhere in this report, this definition makes two assumptions: that the educator is an employee of the state; and that an educator is a school-based practitioner or one who provides management services that supports teachers. Clearly, this alienates not only those who are school-based employees of and practitioners in the private sector, but also practitioners and providers in other sub-sectors such as Early Childhood Development, Adult Basic Education and Workplace Education.

#### **2.2.2 The South African Council of Educators' *Code of Conduct***

As a professional body responsible for the registration, regulation and development of professional educators, the South African Council of Educators has legislative powers to determine criteria for entry into the profession (through registration of educators), to regulate the ethical conduct of its members (through the *Code of Conduct* and disciplinary structures) and to take responsibility for the professional development of its members together with the NDOE, SAQA and the ELRC. This latter role of professional development is not yet clearly defined or developed, but would include "the research and development of learning programmes designed to inculcate educators into the ethics of the profession" (Parker, 1998).

In the bigger picture of professional development, SACE takes primary responsibility for defining and promoting the ethics and values of professionalism, while the NDOE and the ELRC are more concerned with the occupational requirements and SAQA with the academic requirements of the profession.

The 'educators' who make up the membership of SACE are defined as:

any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or provides professional therapy at any school, technical college or college of education or assists in rendering professional services or educational auxiliary services provided by or in a department of education (and whose employment is regulated by the Educators' Employment Act, 1994) and any other person registered with the council (*SACE Code of Conduct*).

The term 'educator' thus includes principals, district officers and school management. The important point here is that the *Code of Conduct* does not apply to teachers only, but also to the management, support and service systems that support the teachers.

However, as already observed, this current definition restricts membership of SACE to CS (college and school) educators in public schools and provincial colleges, and excludes educators in the subfields of Higher Education, Workplace Education, Adult Basic Education, Early

Childhood Development and educators in independent schools and colleges. There is some discussion at the moment about extending the definition of membership of SACE to include these non-CS educators.

As the name suggests, the *Code of Conduct* is a set of ethical principles to which professional educators are expected to adhere. Any educator registered with SACE is subject to disciplinary measures if s/he is found guilty of a breach of the Code. Such measures may include a fine or deregistration.

After a short preamble linking the education profession with the development needs and the Constitution of South Africa, the *Code of Conduct* adopts the language of roles and competences, listing twenty two statements describing the ethical behaviour of educators under the headings of seven different roles. These roles describe the conduct of the educator in relation to:

- the learner
- the parent
- the community
- his or her colleagues
- the profession
- his or her employer • SACE

The *Code of Conduct* generally upholds the human rights embodied in the Constitution, relating these rights specifically to the educational context with a sensitivity to the unequal power relations that exist between educators and learners.

#### (a) **Strengths of the SACE Code of Conduct**

##### *Promotes professionalism and a commitment to human rights*

Its strengths lie in the drive for professionalism among educators, the sensitivity to the unequal power relations that exist between educators and learners (and among educators themselves), and the commitment to the ideals of democracy and human rights. The SACE code recognises that professionalism among educators entails not just individual conduct, but the practice of teaching and learning, which impacts on the overall quality of education in the country. Further, the clause which states that all educators registered with SACE "acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the constitution of South Africa", and the requirement that educators should not only respect the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners (including the right to privacy and confidentiality), but also strive to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with those upheld in the bill of rights, are indicative of the Council's sensitivity to imbalances in power relations and commitment to democratic ideals.

**(b) Weaknesses of the SACE Code of Conduct Assumes that values are uncontested**

One of the major weaknesses of the SACE code of conduct, however, is the apparent assumption that norms and values are universal and uncontested. The Council expects all registered educators, to commit themselves to act in accordance with the *ideals* of their profession as expressed in the *Code of Conduct*. This risks the creation of a system that is purely regulatory, prescriptive, rigid, and therefore largely unresponsive to the different contexts in which educators work. This is particularly true with regard to the perceived relationship between the educator and the learner. While acknowledging that an educational institution serves the community within which it is located, and that therefore there will be differing customs, codes and beliefs, the *SACE Code* contradictorily fails to capture and infuse the acknowledged cultural diversities in its prescription of the relationship between the teacher and the learner. Specifically, there is a striking difference between the language used to define the relationship between the teacher and the parents/community (which tends to be accommodative) and that used to define the relationship between the teacher and the learner (which tends to be prescriptive). One may argue therefore that the *SACE Code* assumes that the influence of contextual diversities on the teacher's role in the community does not extend to the teacher's role in actual classroom practice. We think it does.

*Adopts an exclusive definition of the term 'educator'*

The second major shortfall of the *SACE Code* relates to the definition of the term educator. Like the *COTEP Norms and Standards for Educators*, the *SACE Code* has adopted the definition of educator as stipulated in the Educators' Employment Act, 1994. As pointed out earlier, this definition is limiting as it excludes educators in certain sectors and sub-fields. Limiting the application of the *SACE Code* to employees of the public service has two major implications. Firstly, it creates a parallel system with inherent double standards for regulating the ethics of the teaching profession. Secondly, it marks a departure from the usual practice of most professional bodies whose ethical requirements are binding to all members of the profession, regardless of the sector (public or private) in which they practice. It is acknowledged that SACE is the brain child of the National Department of Education and the unions. However, if efforts to inject and sustain professionalism among educators, and to nationally promote teaching as a profession are to bear fruit, it is perhaps time for divorcing the marriage between SACE and the National Department of Education, and redefining the relationship from that which espouses patronage to that which embraces autonomy and partnership.

### *Needs to be supported by a programme of ethical professional development*

The SACE *Code* is very optimistic about the practice and conduct of its members being founded on democratic principles and respect for basic human rights. Specifically, the code requires educators to "...acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the constitution of South Africa". However, this optimism may merely serve a rhetorical rather than the intended regulatory purpose, unless it is accompanied by an appropriate programme of professional development which actively promotes the values and ethics enshrined in the *Code of Conduct*. Otherwise, both the Council and the *Code* might come to be seen as merely serving a prescriptive and punitive role.

### **2.2.3 The Education Labour Relations Council *Manual* for Developmental Appraisal**

In 1996 the ELRC commissioned the Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU) to develop appraisal criteria for educators at all post levels. A first draft was circulated and debated amongst the state departments and the unions until consensus was reached in December 1997. Now in its final draft, the *Appraisal Manual* is expected to officially come into operation in 1999.

As the legal employer of all CS educators, the National Department of Education needs a means of appraising the competence of teachers at all levels 'to facilitate the personal and professional development of educators in order to improve the quality of teaching practice and education management ... based on the fundamental principle of lifelong learning and development' (*ELRC Appraisal Manual*). The introduction of appraisal, according to the ELRC Task Team, was driven by the need to: create a nationally unified system of appraisal; recognize the work of dedicated educators; encourage professional development and quality service delivery; and lay a foundation for performance management.

The *Appraisal Manual* regards developmental appraisal as an ongoing process, co-ordinated by a Staff Development Team (consisting of the principal, elected staff members and others) which includes:

- self evaluation
- peer evaluation
- collaboration
- reflective practice
- interaction with panels

Throughout the appraisal process, a file is kept for each educator, recording his/her ongoing development.

**Forms which need to be included in an educator's file (the outlines of which are provided by the Manual)**

Form	Purpose	Completed by
Personal Details Form	Record of personal particulars; academic, professional and other qualifications; teaching, management and other experience.	Appraisee
Professional Growth Plan	Plan for development in a 6-month cycle, reflecting objectives, activities, resources and key performance indicators.	Appraisee and panel
Prioritisation Form	A list of core, optional and additional criteria (with each core criterion and its associated performance expectation defined in the Manual). A simple scale is used to determine areas of priority for each development cycle.	Appraisee and peer
Discussion Paper	A list of questions designed to evaluate the success and the difficulties of the Professional Growth Plan within a development cycle.	Appraisee and panel

After outlining the aims, principles and procedures of the appraisal process, and providing a week-by-week management plan for a 6-month development cycle, the *Manual* consists largely of the 'Instruments for Developmental Appraisal' for the following levels:

- Post Level One
- Head of Department
- Deputy Principal / Principal
- CS educators based outside institutions

These 'instruments' are the forms listed in the table above, with most pages of the document devoted to the careful definition and description of the core criteria for each post level. Although they are labelled 'criteria', 'definitions' and 'performance expectations', the core criteria outlined in the *Manual* closely resemble the descriptions of roles and applied competences in the *COTEP Norms and Standards* document.

The strengths and weaknesses of the ELRC appraisal document are closely linked to each other, often forming opposite sides of the same coin. This is because, by attempting to combine the functions of development and appraisal, the *Manual* inevitably inhabits the tension between promoting professional accountability and undermining professional autonomy. The strengths and weaknesses of the document are discussed in more detail below:

**(a) Strengths of the ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal**

***Promotes the democratic principle of accountability, as well as professional development***

Internationally, accountability is one of the central requirements of democratic practice, and is demanded in all spheres of public life: social, economic and political. Accordingly,

the introduction of accountability among educators, should be viewed as one of the key contributions of the appraisal document. The aim of appraisal, as stated in the *Manual*, is

"to facilitate the personal and professional development of educators in order to improve the quality of teaching practice and education management". It has been argued that appraisal is a form of evaluation which may serve two purposes: to make the teacher accountable by measuring his/her performance against certain requirements; and to develop and improve curriculum (Kelly, 1989, p.186). From the stated aims and rationale for its introduction, both of which emphasize professional development and improved service delivery (of both the teaching practice and education management), developmental appraisal is meant to serve both purposes.

*Embraces all stakeholders, actively involves the appraisee and grants the "right of reply"*

The structures and processes envisaged by the Manual have three major implications. Firstly, the appraisal manual envisages a structure which, as stated earlier, essentially consists of two bodies: the Staff Development Team (SDT) and the Appraisal Panels. Although the composition of the two bodies is well defined, the actual process by which the defined membership to the appraisal panel is constituted is not specified. However, from its composition, it is evident that the appraisal panel embraces all stakeholders: educator's peer, union, management, employer, and the community. Similarly, the composition of, and process by which, the STD is constituted, points to a stakeholder driven exercise. By embracing a stakeholder-driven approach to appraisal, the appraisal policy reinforces the principle of accountability among educators. The implicit message is that the educator is not just accountable to her employer, but to other stakeholders in the wider community and to the teaching profession itself. Secondly, by making the educator an active participant rather than a passive subject of the appraisal process, and by democratising the SDT membership, the potential tension of viewing appraisal as a tool for external control of educators by the employer, is largely diffused. Thirdly, by granting the appraisee the 'right of reply', the appraisal process extends to the staff and structures that support the appraisee. This may be seen particularly in the discussion paper which concludes each appraisal cycle, where the educator is asked "Is there anything you need that could help you develop your skills?" and "Do you receive sufficient support from your colleagues/ senior staff/ principal/ governing body/ department officials?". Here the appraisee has a chance to state her needs and to point out problems that might exist within the system rather than in her own practice, and to suggest solutions to these problems.

The major strength of the structure envisaged by the manual for developmental appraisal may thus be seen as the attempt to develop accountability among educators, promote a partnership approach to school practices and development, and do both without seriously compromising the educator's democratic and professional rights. Overall, it may be argued that the manual for developmental appraisal reinforces the democratic dimensions advocated by other policy documents, by introducing an appraisal procedure which is all inclusive: it involves the input of all stakeholders including learners, peers, management and the community.

*Accommodates contextual diversity by allowing for flexibility and choice*

The manual and instruments for appraisal attempt to link the appraisal criteria to the key roles of the educator (job description) in a flexible way by introducing three dimensions of appraisal criteria: core, optional and additional. While the core criteria are intended to apply to all educational institutions, the optional criteria and additional criteria are to be decided by individual appraisal panels. The optional criteria allow the educator to choose which of the core criteria do not necessarily apply to her current appraisal cycle (although an explanation for these choices to the appraisal panel is required). The additional criteria require the educator to identify her own priorities for each cycle which may not be listed among the core criteria. Furthermore, the prioritisation form requires the appraisee to prioritise the core, optional and additional criteria for each cycle - the appraisee is asked to identify which criteria are: a priority for the current cycle; a priority identified for future cycles; or not a priority because the educator's performance is in keeping with the expectation. These provisions infuse the element of flexibility and choice in the appraisal criteria, and more importantly, allow some degree of autonomy for appraisal panels. Indeed, herein lies the conceptual strength of the envisaged developmental appraisal: a realization and accommodation of the contextual diversities of educational institutions within which it will be implemented.

*Clearly defines the appraisal criteria*

A major strength of the instruments for appraisal is the comprehensive definition and operationalisation of all terms and concepts used in appraisal. Thus, unlike the *COTEP Norms and Standards for Educators*, the ELRC appraisal policy document operationalises important concepts and therefore reduces the chance of subjective interpretations. However, there is a striking similarity between the two policy documents as what is stated as appraisal criteria in the instruments for appraisal refers to educator roles, while what is stated as expectations refers to competences.

**(b) Weaknesses of the ELRC *Manual* for Developmental Appraisal**

*If used unskillfully, could compromise professional autonomy*

We have commended the *Manual* for attempting to link professional development with professional accountability. However, if the experiences of other countries such as Britain is anything to go by, there is bound to be a mismatch between the intentions of developmental appraisal and the way teachers will come to view it in practice. One of the possible tensions will arise from the fact that as stated, appraisal will not only be meant to promote professional development and quality service delivery, but also to "*recognise the work of dedicated educators*" (emphasis ours) and be used as "a tool for performance management". All appraisal forms are to be kept on file and the *Manual* states that "such documentation could serve as part of the CV, for future promotions / career pathing". It is

clear, though never explicitly stated. that if these documents may be used to gain information about the educator for purposes of "recognition" and promotion, then by implication they may be used for purposes of demotion and dismissal as well. Unless a clear balance is maintained between the use of appraisal for the educators' professional development and its use for fulfilling requirements of accountability and record-keeping, appraisal may eventually come to be seen as a strategy for ensuring compliance to external requirements, and therefore undermining professionalism which other policy documents seek to promote. This points to a need for conceptual clarity, where developmental appraisal is embraced primarily as a mechanism for the professional development of the educator, rather than a tool for his/her control by the employer.

*Relies heavily on the assumption that educators possess a high degree of reflexive competence*

There is one major assumption which the *Appraisal Manual* makes, that might prove problematic in practice. The appraisal structure and process demand that certain roles be played by the educator, for which possession of certain competences is assumed. The educator, for instance, is expected to: undertake self analysis and introspection of his/her performance, learner questionnaire results, as well as school development plans; identify and prioritize his/her professional development needs; formulate objectives; select and execute activities within time frames; and reflexively interpret and analyse the extent to which their performance met the objectives in serving the needs of clients with a view to rethinking on-going practice. Clearly, this points to the role of the educator as a researcher, scholar and lifelong learner, and to a lesser extent a manager. A successful implementation of the developmental appraisal policies will therefore be largely dependent on the educator's (as well as other members of the SDTs and appraisal panels) possession of the reflexive competences underlying the appraisal procedures. An obvious point is that the very process of appraisal will develop these reflexive competences among educators (and the policy is to be commended for this), but the acquisition of such competences will be shaky at first and gradual. This points to the need for all educators to be trained in developmental appraisal *before* its implementation.

*Does not explicitly evaluate the educator's role in promoting the democratic/ human rights values described by the other documents*

A notable weakness of the *Manual for Developmental Appraisal* is the conspicuous omission of the democratic and human rights dimension in the proposed appraisal criteria: a move that is likely to defeat the very democratic practices that most of the policy documents reviewed in this report seek to promote. It is important to bear in mind that while all of the documents under analysis serve both symbolic and regulatory functions, the *Appraisal Manual* carries the most clout in terms of its regulatory function because teachers will be actively *using* the instruments in the *Manual* to support and monitor their professional development, while the other documents will probably sit on a shelf in the principal's office and remain unseen. It is a common argument that assessment and

evaluation processes often dictate the terms of a learning programme (matric exams being the most obvious example). If the terms of professional development for educators include the promotion of a culture of human rights, as shown in the other documents, then, if it is to be taken seriously, this role should be evaluated in any appraisal process.

#### **2.2.4 National Department of Education *Duties and Responsibilities of Educators***

The 1997 Education Laws Amendment Act introduced an amendment to the 1996 National Education Policy Act which in effect gave power to the Minister of Education to determine job descriptions for educators at various levels. This was effected by changing one word in the Act from 'qualifications' to 'requirements' which includes both qualifications and job descriptions. This power vested in the minister comes ultimately from the Labour Relations Act which gives all employers the right to set job descriptions. The Duties and Responsibilities document was therefore devised to provide job descriptions for different post levels against which educators can be legally appointed, promoted and appraised by the Department of Education.

The preamble to the document outlines the changing role of the educator with the new curriculum, stressing the 'shift from control to leadership'.

For each post level the document lists duties and responsibilities of educators under the heading of particular roles. For Post Level One, there is a list of 23 responsibilities under the headings: • teaching

- extra- and co-curricular
- administrative
- interaction with stakeholders

For each post level, the list of responsibilities is followed by the heading 'Communication' and a list of responsibilities related to co-operation and collaboration within the school, contact with parents, professional development and public relations.

##### **(a) Strengths of the Duties and Responsibilities document**

*Assumes an understanding of the roles and competences outlined in the other documents*

Generally, the duties and responsibilities outlined in this document incorporate all the six roles of the educator as identified and discussed in the COTEP document, but without the rhetorical flourish of the COTEP, SACE and ELRC documents. The *Duties and Responsibilities* document is dry and technical in comparison, listing the day-to-day activities of educators, with brief allusions to the principles of learner-centred, outcomes-based education. The roles and competences outlined in the other three documents are loosely implied in this document, but not explicitly stated.

### *Encourages accountability to some extent*

This document, like the developmental appraisal document, further reinforces the emerging culture of, and demand for, educator accountability. While acknowledging that the professional commitment of the educator and the nature of work serve to ensure that he/she works more than the requisite hours of the public service, it is none the less demanded that the educator (like a civil servant) must be able to *account* for a minimum of 1800 actual working hours per annum. Although the accounting procedure is not specified, it appears that it would be closely linked to the scheduled teaching time as reflected on the school timetable. So the policy document rightly demands educator accountability, but wrongly assumes that this can be tied to prescribed working or actual teacher-learner contact hours per week/year.

### (b) **Weaknesses of the *Duties and Responsibilities* document**

#### *Expects competences in educators which are unlikely to be attained in the few hours allocated to professional development*

Most of the roles, as has already been discussed, will demand that the educator undergoes continuous professional development. However, if implemented, the proposed policy on duties and responsibilities of educators could hamper rather than promote professional development amongst educators. This is reflected by the clause which stipulates that "all educators may be required by the employer to attend programmes for ongoing professional development for up to a maximum of 80 hours (ten working days) per year", all of which must be outside the formal school day. The prescribed work load of teachers, which keeps them occupied both within and outside formal school hours, is therefore likely to impact negatively on efforts to enhance their personal and professional development.

#### *Distinguishes too simplistically between big and small schools*

The assumption that educators will work in different institutional contexts (small and big schools) is right, but the proposal and justification that principals in smaller schools should have a heavier teaching load than those in big schools is problematic. Although the definition of big and small is not given, there is a need to re-think the organizational, managerial and developmental constraints that principals of individual schools face, and decide workloads on an individual basis. Elsewhere in this report, for instance, it has been shown and argued that teachers in small schools (which may be under-resourced) play a wider variety of roles than which may be expected of teachers in big schools, where there may be specialist counsellors, sports coaches and administrative staff.

### 2.3 Trends and converging themes

In the foregoing analysis, we have identified a number of strengths and weaknesses in the four policy documents under discussion. Here we summarise the collective strengths of the documents, focusing in particular on the way in which they work together to create an holistic regulatory and developmental system for educators.

*The new policies mark a shift from the non-democratic educational practices of apartheid to a new democratic system.*

One of the most obvious trends in the policy documents is the shift from Christian National Education and apartheid education to Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes Based Education. Viewed together, the documents reflect a consistent ethos of education which not only attempts to create and define a new approach, but also to rectify and redress past educational practices which are no longer seen as appropriate to education in a democratic South Africa. A close reading of the documents reveals quite specific references to ineffective and inappropriate teaching practices. In other words, the documents do not only outline what educators *should* do, but also what they *should no longer* do.

In our view, the documents are underpinned by the principles, and employ the language and concepts, of a liberal model of education, emphasising liberal values (such as individual potential, critical thinking, autonomy and democracy) along with the terms and values of outcomes-based education.

*There is general coherence and internal consistency within and amongst the documents; they function together to provide an holistic view of the effective educator, using the concepts of roles and competences.*

The four documents analysed in this chapter function together to create an holistic regulatory and developmental system. As such, they have certain concepts and assumptions in common, the most important of which is the view of applied competences as encompassing knowledge, skills and values. While the documents function together to address all three, in our view, each one privileges a particular focus, as illustrated in the table below:

<b>focus</b>	<b>professional requirements</b>	<b>requirements outlined by</b>
knowledge	academic requirements	COTEP Norms and Standards
skills	occupational requirements	DOE Duties and Responsibilities ELRC Appraisal Manual
values	ethical requirements	SACE Code of Conduct

The three dimensions of applied competence are also captured in the notion of practical, foundational and reflexive competences. An educator in possession of all three kinds of competence is a self-directed, well-informed and highly skilled professional with a strong sense of ethics and accountability, who is constantly reflecting on and developing her practice.

*The policies firmly uphold the principles enshrined in the Constitution, while in other matters they provide a fair degree of flexibility and sensitivity to contextual diversity*

By employing the concepts of roles and competences rather than prescribing actual forms of knowledge, performances and behaviours, the policy documents introduce a degree of flexibility and allow educators to make choices appropriate to their own contexts. The *COTEP Norms and Standards* document allows for flexibility at the level of ETD providers and programmes; the *ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal* allows for flexibility at the level of accountability and appraisal; and the *NDOE Duties and Responsibilities* document allows for flexibility by defining educators' daily duties and responsibilities in terms of the roles and competences outlined in the other documents. The *SACE Code of Conduct* makes fewer compromises and allows for less flexibility than the other documents, but this is perhaps appropriate in that the *Code* commits educators to the principles of the Constitution which are binding on every citizen.

*The documents work together to promote teaching as a profession, and attempt to create a balance between professional accountability and professional autonomy.*

Each document makes its own contribution to the development of a uniquely South African view of teaching as a profession. Perhaps the most important aspect of professionalism is the notion of accountability: teachers are accountable not only to the state as employer but also to other stakeholders - learners, peers, management, unions and the community - within the legal and ethical terms laid out by the Constitution. The inevitable tension between professional accountability and autonomy cannot be legislated away by policy, but has to be inhabited and negotiated by educators themselves. In our view, the policy documents, and particularly the *ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal* allow sufficient creative space for this kind of negotiation by employing the terms of roles and competences, and by allowing teachers to choose and prioritise the criteria of professional development in a flexible way.

## **2.4 Problems, inconsistencies and omissions**

In this section we discuss the weaknesses we have identified that could expose the new policies to difficulties in their implementation and reception.

*The term 'educator' employed by each of the documents is not inclusive of all educators, and thereby undermines attempts to promote teaching as a profession.*

We have already noted the problem of the exclusivity of the term 'educator' used in each of the documents, and particularly in the *SACE Code of Conduct*. While the term is inclusive of all levels of responsibility within the schooling system, it excludes educators in the non-CS subfields in the Education, Training and Development field (Workplace Education, Early Childhood Development, Higher Education and Training, Adult Basic Education and Training). In our view, if education is to be regarded as a profession, then the terms and requirements of professionalism should extend to all educators and not just to those who happen to be legally employed by the state. According to Parker (1998), there is an intention to address this problem by de-linking SACE membership from the Educator's Employment Act or by amending this Act, and non-CS educators are encouraged to join SACE.

*The symbolic function of the policies is not always carried through by their regulatory and procedural functions.*

It is possible to view some aspects of the policy documents as being idealised wish lists, serving a purely symbolic function which is not carried through by means of regulatory and procedural policy. To some extent this is inevitable as policy will always point towards ideals which can only be attempted in implementation. But there are instances where the practicalities of the structures and processes advocated by the policies could meet the stated aims more effectively. An important example is that in the *COTEP Norms and Standards* and the *SACE Code of Conduct*, there is a strong emphasis on the educator's acknowledgement, upholding and promotion of human rights. However, the *ELRC Appraisal Manual* and the *NDOE Duties and Responsibilities*, which carry more clout in terms of their regulatory and procedural functions, largely fail to incorporate the human rights dimension in their job descriptions and appraisal criteria. There is a danger, then, that the vision of effective educators created by the new policies will remain simply a vision.

*The competences described do not always operationalise the roles to which they are connected.*

The assumption that the competences outlined by the documents operationalise the roles to which they are connected requires closer examination. We have argued that there is a general consistency amongst the documents in their definitions of roles and competences, but we have also noted some fuzzy areas where competences are not clearly linked to particular roles. For example, the roles and competences related to leadership, management and administration are confused. The *NDOE Duties and Responsibilities* document stresses in its introduction the importance of the "shift from control to leadership" yet only in the *ELRC Appraisal Manual* documents are leadership and management clearly defined in terms of criteria and performance expectations, while the

role of administrator is not clearly defined at all. In the COTEP document none of these categories are clearly defined. Given the importance of leadership qualities in the new education dispensation which relies on self-directed educators and learners, this is a serious omission. We have praised the documents for allowing a degree of flexibility in the *application* and *choice* of criteria for professional development and accountability. but we do not think this flexibility should extend to the *definition* of particular roles and competences, otherwise they become meaningless.

*Values are sometimes assumed to be universal and uncontested.*

We have criticised the SACE *Code of Conduct* for assuming that the professional values it upholds are appropriate to all contexts, and to varying degrees each of the other documents is also open to this criticism. Again, this is an inevitable trap for policy to fall into, particularly when attempting to define professional ethics in terms of a national Constitution which itself, in the interests of nation-building, tends to emphasise commonality rather than difference. However, if disciplinary measures may be taken against a teacher for failing to uphold values which are not subscribed to in the school or community in which he works, this could lead to serious problems.

*There is a tension between the regulatory and development functions of the policies.*

We have perceived a tension between the regulatory and development functions of the documents. In many cases, competences are required which we know many educators do not have. We have commended the documents, and particularly the COTEP document, for taking a broad, holistic view of the educator, one which is helpful for the developmental function of the new policies. But when the regulatory/ accountability / appraisal function is being served, this holistic view might be impossible for educators to live up to- its very breadth creates a list of competences and categories so comprehensive that one single educator will not be able to match up to all of them, and some contexts may not demand all of these competences either (as is recognised in *ELRC Appraisal Manual*). It needs to be acknowledged that some competences will need to be acquired by teachers before they can be required by policy, and unless the new policies are implemented in a flexible way and supported by effective training and development programmes, they might be seen by educators as prescriptive, unreasonably demanding and punitive, rather than supportive and developmental.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This analysis of the roles and competences of educators outlined by policy reveals that, despite a few inconsistencies, there is a common and consistent vision of education in general and teachers' roles in particular. The language of roles and competences combined with the principles of liberal, democratic education within a culture of human rights is shared by all four documents. The question remains, however, whether these roles and competences reflect and are relevant to the daily experience of educators, and it is the aim of this research project to address this question.

## Chapter 3

### School and teacher profiles

The purpose of this section is to give a broad overview of the context of each of the six schools which were involved in the research process. This is felt to be important as one of the key questions is how policy will play itself out in the very different school contexts which exist in South Africa.

All the schools are co-educational, and all (except Arum, which has a boarding establishment) are day schools.

#### 3.1 Aster secondary school

Number of learners: 1171 learners

Number of educators: 32 educators

Matric pass rate 1997-75% 1996-88% 1995-100%

##### Environment

The school is located approximately 20 kilometres from the city centre. The surrounding areas are fairly poor, with the majority of houses being wattle-and-daub. The road to the school has recently been tarred as part of an RDP project.

##### Resources

There is a secretary with a type writer, as well as a Gestetner machine. A video, television and photocopier is kept in the strong room. Apparently students pay 15c per copy if their teacher copies notes. The office has heavy anti burglar grills on the doors and windows. The Principal has a very large office with a phone extension. Lots of trophies are displayed on the top of bookshelves and cabinets. The staff room is quite small and cannot accommodate all the staff. The male teachers use an office as their staff room.

There are sufficient classrooms with sufficient desks in each. The largest class observed was a Grade 10 class with 53 learners. The Matric classes have an average of 30 students. Many classrooms have broken windows. There are not enough textbooks and learners share these or buy their own. There is a fairly well stocked library, but it is not clear how often it is used. There is electricity and piped water. The water is apparently erratic and the female students use pit latrines. The staff have flush toilets which are locked. The sports fields are being renovated - currently there are no real soccer or netball fields.

## **Ethos of the school**

Late coming seemed to be the norm for both students and teachers. One morning, the teacher/ co-researcher gave each latecomer a stroke on the hand - and there must have been about 150 who came in after 8am. As did six teachers. Apparently most of the latecomers are those students who live within the vicinity of the school, while those who travel by taxi or bus are punctual. At the assembly we attended at 7.50am, only six teachers were present, and possibly half the learners . The Principal was never present at 8am. There are a number of students wandering around the school at any time - buying things from the tuckshop, going to the shop for a teacher, etc. The environment is noisy due to the teachers and learners walking around during classtime.

Learners did not seem to have a great deal of respect for teachers or vice versa. Corporal punishment was administered fairly freely. According to the Principal, the community and parents are happy with teachers using corporal punishment. However, one member of the School Governing Body, who is also the security guard, felt that it was not the best way and that it was important to try out other forms of discipline. He said learners do come to him to complain about the use of corporal punishment. There does not appear to be much team spirit amongst the staff. All the hour lessons observed were 50 minutes long, as they always started 10 minutes late.

### Selection of educators

The Principal felt that it was very important for the staff to select the educators in a democratic way. After the two field workers spoke to the whole staff about the project, there were a few questions which indicated educators' uncertainty: a sense that there was some deception underlying the project as well as a suspicion that the school would be used without benefiting. The field workers then left the staff room while staff decided who would be involved.

## **3.2 Marguerite secondary school**

Number of learners: 780 learners

Number of educators: 29 staff (2 paid by governing body)

Matric pass rate: 1997-97%

1996-100%

1995-100%

### Environment

The school is situated in a peri-urban area, 22 kms from the city centre. It is situated a few hundred metres off the main tar road, down a dirt road. The surrounding community is poor, and has been affected by violence in the past. There are a number of burnt out houses.

### Resources

The school has three classroom blocks which are fairly run down - broken windows and no doors. There are enough desks for all of the students in each classroom. There is a new double storey

room was built at the same time. This was burnt and is not being used. The Principal and deputy share a small office, with the secretary typing in the adjoining stationery room. There are two manual typewriters for making stencils of exam papers and a Gestetner machine for making copies.

The staffroom is a small classroom with about 16 student desks. There is not enough space for all the educators. Apparently the male educators stand outside during break.

There is no piped water, no electricity and no phone. The school yard is mostly dust which turns to mud in the rain. Apparently educators then leave their cars on the main road, put on gum boots and walk to the school!

### **Ethos of the school**

Order is one's first impression. There are no students milling about during lesson time. There is a strict policy that no learner will leave the class without permission from an educator or management. The school begins with assembly at 7.40 and field workers observed that the majority of students and staff were there at that time. The vast majority of learners were in classrooms at 8am when the educator walked in to teach. Late coming and absenteeism are simply not tolerated by the Principal. A teacher said that educators know that they are here to work - they are a "professional" staff. If a educator is absent, then this causes problems for others, since his/her class is left alone and the noise makes it difficult for the rest of the school. The school has monthly tests for three days where students write exams on all their subjects. There is a special examination team who organises these each month. According to the teacher, these monthly exams are written in stringent exam conditions (no cheating allowed etc) and this prepares students to write the final exams. The Superintendent of Education and Management (SEM) said the reason for the high matric pass rate was "discipline and hard work". The Principal has been at the school since 1979 and refuses to take a post as an Inspector.

### **Community**

Apparently learners come from a number of neighbouring townships covering a wide geographical area because the school has a strong reputation for producing good results. There is a strong parent participation with an active School Governing Body. A few weeks previously parents had met to discuss the retrenchment of two educators. They wanted to keep the educators on and agreed to increase school fees from R35 to R100 per annum so that the 2 educators could be paid to remain on staff (although the principal says that what they will be paid is hardly a "salary"). The SGB also voted to maintain the policy of corporal punishment despite the departmental policy.

### **Selection of educators**

The Principal said that he would choose the educators and tell them that they had been selected as representatives of the school in this research project. There should be no sense that they were the most effective educators in the school, and that others were less effective. A staff committee

(whether selected or nominated was difficult to establish) nominated a group of educators to participate in the research. The Principal and his Deputy selected the two educators whom we worked with from this group. The Principal frequently emphasised that all his educators were good educators.

### **3.3 Dahlia high school Number of learners: 849**

Number of educators: 23

Matric pass rate: 1995-83%

1996-60%

1997 - still awaiting final results due to exam irregularities

#### **Environment**

Located in a rural area, 90 kilometres from the Pietermaritzburg city centre. Resources

The school has few resources - electricity in some offices only; outdoor tap; no telephone; one photocopy machine donated by Sappi; big sports field with no grass; pleasant staff room; classrooms have chalkboards, enough desks and chairs, good ventilation, but a bit small for student numbers; there is a serious shortage of textbooks - many students share and spend much time copying from books.

#### **Ethos**

The school has a good atmosphere; people seem to treat each other with genuine respect and friendliness; students are relaxed with educators and authority structures seem to be easily accepted. According to a teacher, the surrounding community is quite traditional and conservative, with parents insisting on strong discipline, a formal dress code and corporal punishment in the school. A field worker noted "I got the sense of a 'fit' between the ethos of the home and the school, in that educators and pupils seem to share similar values and to be comfortable with their roles and relationships. One of the days we spent at the school was Casual Day - the students dressed in civvies (most of them quite neat and formal- the boys in collars and ties) and the educators wore school uniforms. Later in the day the students put on a talent show attended by parents and children from the primary school. There was a general sense of community involvement and a festive atmosphere."

#### **Management**

A top-down approach with clear structures of authority. People speak about "the office" as the centre of decision-making and authority. There is a governing body and the parents seem to have a significant say (e.g. it is only recently, after a lot of negotiation, that parents have agreed to permit women educators to wear trousers). At the request of parents, corporal punishment is practised but there are strict policies and procedures regarding the use of the stick (e.g. only to be

carried out by the office; maximum of three lashes; everything recorded and students know exactly which kind of offences are punishable).

Educator selection

it appeared that educators had been selected by the Principal because many educators were curious about the field workers' presence.

### **3.4 Arum High School**

Number of learners: Approx. 1000 learners

Number of educators: 40 educators

Matric pass rate: 1995-94%

1996-96% 1997-99%

Environment

The school is located in the suburbs of Pietermaritzburg, about 3 kms from the city centre.

#### **Resources**

The school is well resourced with a big library and media centre which has 12 computers for learners' to use, as well as video and televisions. The grounds are big and well-cared for. There is a big administration block, with a receptionist and secretaries. The staff room is large with comfortable chairs. There is a photocopier and a Gestetner machine for large numbers of copies. Ethos

The whole staff meets at 7.45 for notices and announcements every day. These are very informal, democratic affairs where anyone who has anything to say simply puts a hand up and says it. Field workers were automatically considered a part of these meetings (as were students doing practice teaching) as sensitive and newsworthy stuff is sometimes thrown up which anyone hostile to Arum could easily exploit. But through sitting in on these meetings, the ethos and efforts of the school became apparent. There were announcements for example, about Theatre, soccer teams travelling to another school, the Internet Club, leadership programmes and a parents' evening indicating that a lot happens outside of the classroom context.

The principal was only appointed earlier this year and so, in his own words, 'is still finding his way' - so 'management styles' were not easily identified. He does however, have a quiet and unassuming manner and people seemed comfortable and relaxed when talking to him.

Arum has a large proportion of English second language learners, and educators articulate the 'problems' associated with this situation. Importantly, these remain predominantly linguistic problems and rarely overflow into racial issues - something noted by the principal as well. Although there were often tensions between individual or groups of learners during lessons, and

across racial barriers, it was exclusively 'adolescent' (in the time the researcher was there) and usually in reaction to the Big Mouth, the Casanova, the Clown etc!

#### Educator selection

It seemed that the principal had made the decisions about which educators would be involved, and that the staff had been informed of what we'd be doing, but not in any great detail. One said, "Now tell me, what exactly are you doing here?" which suggests that the project had not been profiled in any significant way. The field workers' visit coincided with student practice teaching, so two more 'people from the university' didn't make much difference! The educators selected were quite happy to be part of the process and were very easy about making time for us to do all we had to.

### **3.5 Erica secondary school**

3.6 Number of learners: 1400

Number of educators: 48

Matric pass rate: 1995-91%

1996-93%

1997-95%

#### Environment

The school is situated on the far east boundary of Erica and there is an informal settlement beyond it. The school is located about 10 kilometres from the city centre.

#### Resources

The buildings are relatively new and in a good state of repair. Classrooms are large and offer plenty of room for the learners. Staff and administration accommodation appear to be adequate. There appears to be only one sports field. There is a library and photocopying facilities. The school has a secretary.

#### Ethos

Learners come from very diverse backgrounds including the wealthy and the informal settlement, The majority of learners are now Zulu speaking, while most of the educators are Afrikaans or English speaking. This has brought about a communications problem although this was not evident with the teacher-researcher as she is fluent in English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu! Indications are that this is a busy school with a well defined sense of purpose. The management style appears to be democratic and there was evidence of consultation taking place at all levels.

#### Selection of educator

At an open staff meeting the Principal explained the project and the help that would be required from the staff. After dealing with questions he then called for volunteers stressing that a willingness to participate was vital. One teacher volunteered and proved to be of great assistance.

### **3.6 Salvia secondary school** Number of learners: 1000+

Number of educators: 34

Matric pass rate: 1995 -95%

1996-83%

1997-87%

#### Environment

The school is located in busy area. This is a noisy place due to traffic to and from the main commercial city centre and the industrial area in Pietermaritzburg. It is a small school building (originally meant for 700 pupils).

#### Resources

The school is enclosed in a wire fence. The general appearance of the school is that it is old but well maintained though some furniture needs replacement rather than repair.

#### Ethos

An ordered school. Educators went to the allocated classrooms for the their Grades and took attendance registration. Registration itself was done every day by Grade Educators. During registration, the educator also collected school fees, checked on proper school attire and attended to general house-keeping matters. The register is then taken to the administration office before the educator goes to start his own class. All pupils study academic and trades subjects until grade 9 when they choose the academic or trades training route.

The principal had just been appointed to the school. The management style appeared democratic. The principal seems to have an open-door policy and combines formality and informality in dealings with staff. He is a hands-on kind of manager having been a technical subject educator himself.

#### Selection of educators

The educator who participated was chosen by all the staff using criteria given to the principal by the PEI research team. The principal nominated the educator who was then approved by the staff. As it was a technical school, the main factor was that he had to be a technical rather than an academic subject educator.

### 3.7 Teacher profiles

The table below shows the range of teachers who participated in the research.

#### Teacher profiles

	Qualification	Experience	Gender
1	Secondary Teachers Diploma	10 years	M
2	B. Paed.	9 years	M
3	Secondary Teachers Diploma	9 years	M
4	B.Soc.Science	5 years	F
5	B.A., HDE	4 years	M
6	B. Tech.	6 years	M
7	B.Sc., HDE	10 years	F
8	B.A.	10 years	F
9	B.Sc., HDE, B. Ed.	14 years	M
10	Technical Teachers' Diploma	8 years	M

The range of subjects were: Business Economics, History (x3), Biology, Physical Science (x3), English and Trades Training (Metalwork, Motor Mechanics and Woodwork).

### 3.8 Scenes from the field

The following photographs of the schools which participated in this research show the variety of contexts in which teachers work. We were struck by the obvious differences in resources, but also by the different kinds of atmospheres in schools, which we tried to capture in these pictures.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of the "fit" between policy and practice

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this section, we attempt to map practice (as captured in Appendix J) onto policy (as presented in Chapter Two). In particular, we provide a systematic analysis of the six roles and make certain interpretations of the findings regarding the experiences and practice of the ten effective teachers, examine and explain the degree of fit between policy and practice, and identify some major themes that emerge from the foregoing analysis. Throughout this section, there is a deliberate attempt to focus the discussions on educator roles, competences and effectiveness, which indeed constitute the central theme of the entire study.

#### 4.2 Educator roles and competences: Analysis of practice

As already indicated in chapter one, this study sought to examine and explain the degree of "fit" between policy (what effective teachers should be doing), and practice (what effective teachers are actually doing). Accordingly, ten effective teachers from six effective schools were identified, observed and interviewed. The observations and interviews focussed on six key roles and their underlying competences as largely derived from the *Norms and Standards for Educators*, which every post level one teacher is expected to play or practise. A systematic analysis and interpretation of the data generated for each of the six roles is provided below.

##### 4.2.1 The teacher's role as *Mediator of Learning*

The teacher's role as a Mediator of Learning comprised eleven competences. As shown in Appendix J, *all* teachers demonstrated:

- a sound knowledge of subject content;
- thorough preparation for their lessons; and
- appropriate use of the language of instruction (or other official languages) to communicate key concepts.

Moreover, it was evident that 9 out of 10 teachers

- employed appropriate learning/teaching strategies and resources to achieve desired learner outcomes;
- managed different kinds of classroom learning (individualised, small group and whole class teaching); and
- actively involved the learners through a creation of a democratic but disciplined atmosphere.

However, competences that were less frequently observed or captured through interviews were:

- encouraging the development of life-skills among learners (in particular creative and critical thinking);

- giving frequent and constructive feedback to learners;
- the use of various assessment instruments for formative and summative assessments; and
- the recognition and utilisation of learners' own experiences as a fundamental resource.

Although it is clear that the majority of teachers possessed and utilised all of the competences required by policy for the role of Mediator of Learning, this clarity is not without certain qualifiers. It is evident, for instance, that teachers tend to equate subject familiarity with thorough or effective preparation. It is assumed that having several years of teaching experience meant that no serious preparation was necessary. This was captured among some teachers especially through interviews. One can discern that in such a scenario, teachers will tend to lay emphasis on transmission of content, with little regard to the individual needs of learners. It is not surprising therefore that the educators' sensitivity to the diverse needs of learners, as well as the consideration and utilisation of the learners' own experiences as a fundamental and valuable resource, were among the least frequently observed competences among teachers. Further, except for one teacher, all others used tests, examinations and/or projects for summative assessment: to gauge learners' ability rather than serve diagnostic purposes with a view to improving practice. Equally, some teachers, when observed, never demonstrated any sensitivity to the diverse needs of learners or any attempts to address those needs, but the same teachers, when interviewed, showed a remarkable understanding of the diversity of learners' needs and the possible ways of dealing with them. This points to a distinct lack of balance within the three dimensional concept of competence (practical, foundational and reflexive) advocated by the *Norms and Standards* document.. Teachers might know what to do but, for whatever reasons, do not follow through with practice.

#### **4.2.2 The teacher's Pastoral Role**

Out of the nine competences listed under the Pastoral Role, only one of them was evident among all teachers: involvement in extra-school programmes such as sports, cultural and artistic activities.

Communication with parents to discuss the well-being, conduct and progress of their children was the least observed competence: only six of the ten teachers practised it. But even among those who did, it appears that routine parental involvement seems to be linked to student behavioural/disciplinary problems rather than the academic progress of the learners. Some teachers, especially from rural school settings, argued that parental involvement was not feasible where the parent body was characterised by widespread illiteracy and a general belief that once a child was at school, the teachers had the capacity, and were therefore entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing all the developmental aspects of the learner.

As already shown in Appendix J, it is evident that at least 8 out of the 10 teachers:

- endeavoured to promote gender equality;
- showed an understanding of the educational problems in their school/community context (such as violence, drug abuse, poverty, unemployment and teenage pregnancy);
- took reasonable steps to ensure the safety of learners; and

- made attempts to promote certain values consistent with the Bill of Human Rights as well as demonstrating some respect for the constitutional rights of learners.

However, a closer scrutiny of some specific observations captured from the researchers' comments, as well as direct quotations of some teachers' views, reveal both the practical complexities and contradictions inherent in policy expectations of the teachers' Pastoral Role. Some illustrative cases are given below.

On promotion of gender equality some teachers comment:

"I try to give equal participation to both boys and girls in answering questions in class, policy may demand so. But as an individual, I believe gender equality is untenable." "How do you promote gender equality when the community in which the school is located, and the homes from which learners come, not only practise gender inequality, but insist that the school and therefore the teachers must propagate the same? Do I, as a teacher, do what my employer tells me or what the community where I live and work demands?"

Further, one teacher, being a member and an elected official of a teacher union, seemed very knowledgeable about, and sensitive to the human rights of both learners and other educators. But when asked by a researcher whether he personally believed in gender equality he retorted:

"Never ever! As a man, I believe I am and will always be superior to a woman. Our culture is consistent with this view. For instance, many people ask me why I am not married. I tell them that I will not marry until I get the next degree. I want to marry a woman who is a university graduate. But she must be having lower qualifications than mine. That is why I am working very hard to get my higher degree, then I will marry".

Clearly, although this is a teacher who is evidently involved in lifelong learning, it is not because of commitment to professional ideals of professional development as espoused by policy, but rather a commitment to individual values and beliefs, which are in fact opposed to those of policy.

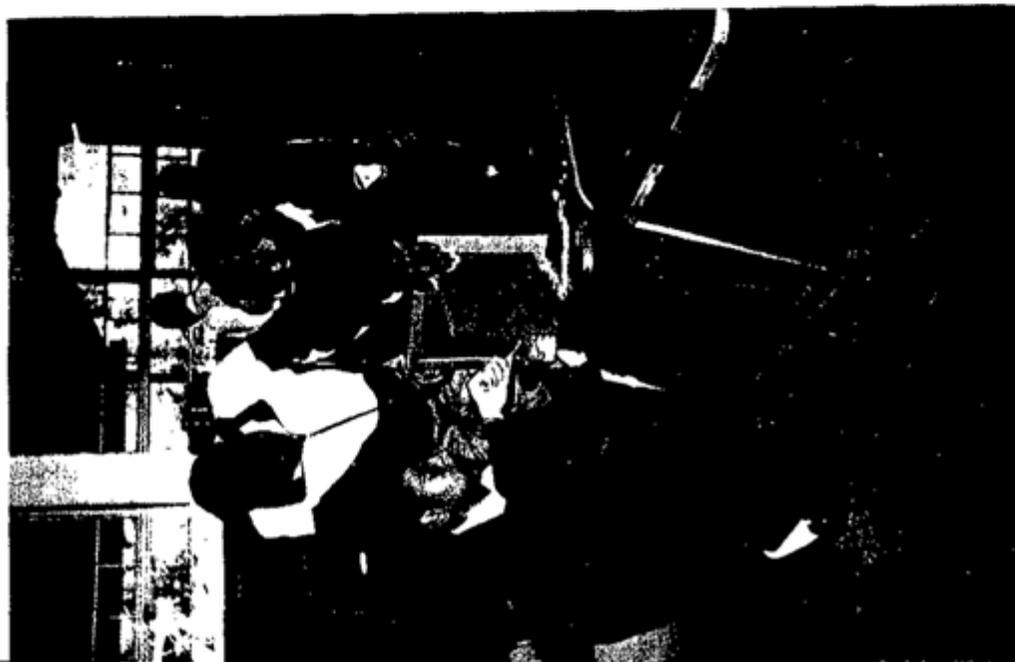
Equally striking was the apparent loose coupling between policy expectations and teacher perceptions about the role of teachers in facilitating the development among learners of a set of values consistent with the Bill of Human Rights, and assisting in overseeing learner counselling and career guidance. On the one hand, when one teacher was asked whether he knew what the Bill of Rights was, he answered in the affirmative. However, when asked to state any of the values upheld by the Bill of Rights, which he as a teacher would strive to develop among learners, he said "learners should know important formulae in ... [subject] and use them correctly in solving problems. They should also be able to perform experiments, for example using... [apparatus]". On the other hand, another teacher, clearly familiar with the Bill of Rights observed:

- making appropriate use of numeracy, technology, computer skills and media literacy;
- keeping of complete and comprehensive student academic records; and
- performance of other administrative duties such as fee collection, time-tabling, control of stock and equipment.

As shown in the data (Appendix J), the planning and co-ordination of team teaching was only noted among 4 of the 10 teachers. The four teachers were either departmental subject co-ordinators within their schools, or chair of regional team teaching/examinations committees established recently. Where practised, integrated and team teaching approaches took various forms and were necessitated by certain conditions. The two common forms of integration and team teaching approaches were:

- (i) *Subject-based sharing of workload.* This involved subject teachers within a given school, teaching certain topics rather than the entire course within or across grades. Usually the choice of topics taught is based on individual preferences and perceived competences. This is reflected in the remarks of one teacher who said "we share workload according to who is competent in which area". Clearly, the process of topic selection or allocation is based on the principles of participatory decision making and therefore underscores the democratic ideals stipulated in the South African constitution;
- (ii) *Inter-school sharing of resources.* This was noted in one of the rural schools, which was relatively under-resourced. The sharing does not just take the form of material resources but educator expertise as well. This involves team setting, moderation and marking of examinations, organization of seminars and workshops for educators and students, as well as the "visiting educator sessions" where a teacher from one school goes to give lessons on special topics to learners in another school. There was evidence of exchanging material resources such as laboratory equipment and chemicals. As one researcher remarked, "This was the strongest aspect of the educator. Although no team teaching in his school, he chairs a committee of science educators in the schools around and is able to utilise resources from other schools".

It is evident from the above analysis that integrated and team teaching approaches, whether utilised within or across schools, was subject specific. Within individual schools, only teachers of a particular subject meet to discuss issues relating to the teaching of that subject. Across schools, subject-based committees are constituted to address matters specific to that subject. Even where there was only one teacher handling a given subject in the entire school or across a series of grades, it was remarked: "She ensures that grades 9 and 10 syllabi are integrated and that the themes are followed through to the higher grades". Clearly, the practice in the field reflects emphasis on the vertical integration within subjects rather than horizontal integration between subjects. Implicitly, such emphasis may develop, reinforce and perpetuate walls rather than bridges of social and professional identity among educators. Moreover, the traditional compartmentalisation of knowledge, and the attendant atomisation of teacher roles and specialisations, are upheld. However, vertical integration, backed up by team teaching where teachers share workload in form of topics within a subject, offers one positive contribution to the







teaching profession: it breaks down intellectual stereotyping on the basis of the level or grade at which a given subject is taught. Further, a point worth noting is that while the scarcity of material resources and under-staffing (especially where there is only one subject teacher in a school) are conditions that work against effective teaching, they also act as strong activators for team teaching approaches across schools.

The analysis of educator competences relating to the appropriate use of numeracy, technology and computer skills as well as media literacy, not only reveals a diversity in school resourcefulness but also contextual limitations to the effectiveness with which certain teacher competences may be practised. While some schools had no technological resources such as computers' electric/electronic typewriters, photocopiers, telephone and electricity, others had a variety of the same. This diversity is captured in some contrasting observations by researchers such as:

"The teacher encourages use of the internet but this is not compulsory" "No electricity but the teacher teaches about computers in business" "School has no computer but the teacher is able to use numeracy to fill in mark sheets" "Evaluations, reports and notes are on diskettes (portable PC). He is computer literate, taking computer studies".

Despite these disparities in resource bases among schools, the competences under discussion were evident among 6 of the 10 teachers, including those from poorly -resourced schools. The statements made by teachers and researchers in connection with these competences reveals that the teacher's *attitude* towards these resources is perhaps as important as the availability or lack of such resources.

Record keeping among the teachers was a common but conflicting practice. Most kept student academic records in form of monthly tests, class registers and end-term examinations but mainly for administrative purposes not for diagnostic reporting. As reported in the data, some teachers had no personal commitment to an ethos of record-keeping but only did what was mandatory. Moreover, it was common practice in some schools for students academic records to be kept under custody of the principal, for use as sanctions against defaulters of fee-payment. This is evident from two of the researchers' comments in which it was observed:

"The teacher maintained that such records were kept by the principal. Apart from a compulsory record book, there was no evidence of attempts to keep own records to monitor learners' progress or recommend remedial measures".

"The teacher collects and records school fees paid, updates grades for each learner and informs principal of outstanding fees, where marks may not be revealed to learners".

Evidently, while policy expects teachers not only to maintain efficient recording and reporting of academic progress, but also to demonstrate an understanding of methods of reporting on learner progress with particular reference to descriptive and diagnostic reporting, within a context of high

illiteracy rates among parents, the practice of educators in the field reflects a tendency to focus on record keeping but not reporting.

#### **4.2.4 The teacher's role as *Designer* of *Learning Programmes***

As a designer of learning programmes, the teacher is expected to possess and practise six competences. These include:

- understanding and interpreting provided learning programmes:
- designing original learning programmes:
- analysing ways in which barriers to learning may be overcome through the design and creation, or selection of innovative learning programmes:
- preparing lessons that take into account learners' needs as well as new approaches to learning/teaching;
- understanding how learning materials can be used to construct learning environments that are more flexible and individualised:
- and evaluating and adapting learning programmes and resources through learner assessment and feedback from learners.

Clearly, while embracing the three dimensions of competence, this role demands, perhaps more than all those already discussed, a strong integration of foundational and practical competences among practising teachers.

Evidence from the field suggests that most teachers are engaged in the implementation of provided programmes but not the design of original ones. Although most teachers acknowledged the importance of developing original and adaptive teaching programmes, they either lacked the necessary skills but expressed a willingness to learn, saw it as a corporate rather than individual responsibility, or argued that such an activity would constitute a deviation from the syllabus and therefore defaulting from their primary responsibility. which is getting learners through the exams. Moreover, it was reported that to one teacher, the concepts of programme interpretation, design and evaluation were alien.

Except for one school where subject departmental meetings were held every three weeks, and during which Biology teachers engaged in some curriculum planning activities including changes/adaptations/ planning excursions, and two teachers were actively involved in the development of innovative learning resources, the overall picture on the involvement of teachers in programme design in schools is pessimistic. This could partly be attributed to the type of training the teachers received in the past, and the nature of competences demanded of the teacher by the previous system of education. It is instructive to note that historically, curriculum planning and development, as well as the design, selection, sequencing and pacing of learning was largely done outside most teachers' domain of participation. The implication was that the development of critical competences underlying such activities was either ignored, or where developed during initial teacher training, served only archival purposes due to non-practice. For instance, teachers were trained to assess learners' performance not to evaluate programmes.

While the participation of most teachers in the design and evaluation of programmes was largely absent. for reasons observed above, their understanding of the barriers to learning and the importance as well as appropriateness of learning resources in addressing those barriers was remarkable. However. except for two teachers, this foundational competence was not translated into practical competence through the design and use of appropriate learning resources, or lesson preparation and actual classroom delivery. This is evident in the following quotes from some of the researchers' comments:

".although he demonstrates knowledge of individual differences among learners, this knowledge is not incorporated in actual plans or actual classroom delivery":

"Feels it is not the right time for new approaches - learners not independent or self-directed enough- need strong guidance" [This may imply the teacher understands and appreciates the new approaches, but cannot translate them into action because of the belief that the timing is wrong];

"Although physical science requires the extensive use of charts. kits etc, the educator's innovation in this area was totally lacking. Appreciates the role of learning resources but believes that they should be supplied rather than be innovated by the educator."

The factors that account for the observed gap between what teachers know and what they actually do or fail to do, were diverse. They range from a lack of enabling environment for programme innovation and resource development, to the teacher's attitude to change. One researcher's comments illustrates this anomaly:

"Saw no work sheets or learning resources. A fairly negative and defeatist attitude. Kept on referring to lack of resources. Any suggestions were met negatively by the teacher. already knowing that this would not work!"

Despite the general mismatch between foundational and reflexive competences noted above, there were three illustrative cases of innovative teachers from both well-resourced and under-resourced schools. These were teachers who, for instance:

- lacked resources for making worksheets but used newspapers instead;
- used materials and resources accumulated over many years-carefully prepared and which had proved successful;
- involved learners in designing and making materials that would be used for commercial or/and instructional purposes;
- prepared materials and programmes for learners, that embedded "remedial work for strugglers and extension work for high fliers", and
- evaluated their own practice and learners' performance, although this did not necessarily lead to adaptation of learning programmes.

Overall, however, evaluation and adaptation of learning programmes may be said to be the competence least attributable to the teachers observed in this study. As already noted, the evaluation of learning programmes is not well appreciated and when done, has no reflexive

component. Most teachers saw programme accomplishment in terms of completion of the syllabus. A further emphasis is that generally, evidence from this study suggests that there is a lack of integration between theoretical knowledge of what ought to be, or the understanding of the role of certain programmes, resources to effective learning, and the practical application of that knowledge in the design and innovation of programmes or resources to facilitate the achievement of educational goals.

#### **4.2.5 The teacher's role as Lifelong Learner**

Competences underpinning lifelong learning as a teacher's role include:

- familiarity with current developments in educational thinking and curriculum development;
- the understanding of, and ability to use effective study methods;
- participation in general school/educator appraisal processes;
- ability to do basic research and apply educational research meaningfully to educational problems;
- participation in departmental committees, seminars, and courses with a view to upgrading one's professional views and standards; and
- ability to access and use information sources such as libraries, community resource centres and computer information centres.

It may be observed that unlike the other four roles, this role is largely introspective and self-interactive: focussing on personal and professional development of the teacher. The competences are defined in terms of what the educator should do by herself and for herself, rather than directly for the learners or community.

As shown in the data, 9 of the 10 teachers were knowledgeable about the new developments in educational thinking and curriculum developments such as the introduction and demands of OBE, the teachers' Code of Conduct, the SA Schools Act (particularly outlawing of corporal punishment) and new developments in industry (where applicable). Most teachers were either pursuing some higher qualifications or had just acquired them through distance learning programmes. A number of them brought their lifelong learning experiences to the classrooms. It is not clear whether this apparent commitment among teachers, to keeping abreast with current educational developments, is by intent or technological accident (such as the proliferation of print and electronic media). However, evidence availed by this study indicate that it is a product of both, not either. Two of the teachers' remarks, namely, that "in industry, keeping abreast of developments is a must", and "I am not an expert, but I stay informed - I can't help it!" point to the idea that certain conditions dictate teachers into keeping abreast. On the other hand, the researchers' remarks such as "[the teacher] acknowledges that an effective educator is one who does not stop learning", or "currently studying for an educational management diploma. A belief [by the teacher] that it is important to keep up to date on both current affairs and new thinking in education", or yet another one like "believes in the non-ending nature of learning", points to commitment based on ones values and beliefs.

The participation of teachers in general school or educator appraisal processes was not only a largely absent phenomenon, but one that was viewed with much suspicion. In the words of one

researcher. 'appraisal is seen as a negative concept/ phenomenon aimed at harassing educators: promoting some and inhibiting the progress of others". Most teachers had not participated in any appraisal processes, whether at the level of the whole-school or individual teacher levels. The two who had participated in what was referred to as informal appraisal, and who thought the idea of appraisal could be important. expressed serious reservations about the accuracy and objectivity of appraisal processes. Only one of the ten teachers reported that there was some form of peer appraisal in the respective school. and in which she participated. Generally however, it is clear that while the intent of policy makers is that teacher appraisal should or will serve the aim of enhancing the professional development, teaching practice, and educational management of educators, the received message is that it will serve to victimise and/or reward teachers. This clearly illustrates the potential tension between policy and practice.

Like appraisal, ability to research did not feature as one of the competences possessed and practised by most teachers. Not only was active participation in the actual research process lacking, but attempts to access and apply existing research findings in solving educational problems were also lacking. Where previous participation in any research activity was mentioned, it referred to what had been once done as a research project for fulfilling the academic requirements for certain qualifications, rather than purposely for the improvement of on-going teaching and learning practices within schools. While some reflection and analysis of own practice was mentioned among two teachers, it was not undertaken as a systematic research activity but a mental exercise. However, according to some teachers, their lack of participation in basic research did not reflect a lack of interest. Rather, they argued, it is a reflection of the type of professional preparation they received and the nature of conditions under which they work. This is reflected in the following comments made by some researchers:

"The teacher has never undertaken basic research at any level although he believes it is vital. Argues that research has never been a culture of schools, but reserved for universities".

"Has no knowledge of research, and how it is fed into classroom programmes. Argues that the workload and time pressure allows them no room to engage in research activities even if they so wished".

"His attitude did not reveal a desire to reflect on or analyse his own teaching".

It is evident, from the foregoing analysis, that in order to enhance teacher participation in basic research, three areas need to be addressed: capacity building; teacher workloads; and attitudes.

#### **4.2.6 The teacher's role as *Community Developer and Citizen***

As a community developer and citizen, a teacher is expected to practise and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others, and towards upholding the Constitution and promoting democratic values and practices in

schools and society. [n order to do so, and do it effectively, the possession and demonstration of a wide range of practical, foundational and reflexive competences is envisaged. These include:

- the development and sustenance of meaningful interaction with various components of community such as other educators and unions, other schools, parents, unions and local business or NGOs;
- the ability to take initiative and decisive actions in problem solving such as conflict resolution in the classroom and school situations;
- upholding the principle of academic integrity and pursuit of excellence in education;
- contributing to the professional development of colleagues *through* sharing of ideas, knowledge and resources as well as inducting new members into the profession;
- having knowledge of the values and customs of the community; commitment to promoting development and education in the community, as well as the establishment of links between the school and community;
- respecting the role of parents and community in school management: and
- collaboration with educators from other schools.

As recorded in the data, the teachers perception of their role as community developers is as diverse as it is contested: reflecting both initiative and indifference; conformity to, and contestation of values; as well as optimistic and pessimistic views of policy initiatives towards educational transformation and change. On the one hand, some teachers were actively involved in teacher unions, inter-school collaboration and the establishment of links between their respective schools and communities, while on the other hand other teachers simply said they did not see the need for such endeavours. Apart from simply not seeing the need for participation in community development, some teachers argued that three factors rendered their actual participation in community development a complex and remote possibility:

- they lived in, and commuted from, areas which were geographically far from the schools where they taught;
- some schools comprised pupils, parents, and localities that were culturally and politically diverse. This, according to some teachers, implied that community values and needs will be as diverse as they will be complex, requiring skills which many of them may not be endowed with; and
- while teaching is rightly recognized as a profession, the demands placed on teachers did not match the remunerations offered. This forced many teachers to be reserved and not give beyond the obligatory. Apparently, community development is one of the services that are not considered by teachers as being obligatory.

Some of these sentiments are reflected in the researchers' comments quoted below:

"A sense that the community here is quite dispersed. The teacher is aware of the problems of poverty, violence, etc in the community. Tries to encourage girls to get matric before getting married. Has a sense of compassion, but thinks the reality is that the school community is not his community"

"Does not live in local community"

"The educator explained that his involvement in community development was limited by the fact that he stays far away from the school, and political differences among parents "[Teacher] Our learners come from a wide geographical area, and most of us live in town, so whose community is it?"

It is evident that not only is teacher-involvement in community development passive, but also the definition of community is contested and problematised. Passive involvement is reflected in the argument advanced by one teacher who said that their tangible contribution to community development lay in the fact that they educated learners, who filtered back into the community as active participants of all forms of development in their respective communities - seemingly subscribing to a trickle-down theory of development. However, it seems clear from the available evidence that teacher participation in certain activities promotes meaningful interaction between the school and the wider community: sports: teacher unions; and community research / development projects.

Parental involvement in school affairs, which teachers are expected to respect and promote, was appreciated but also highly contested. Those who were positive about parental involvement, reported that they encouraged parental participation in certain activities such as praying for examination candidates, as special school functions, and monitoring of homework or assignments given to the learners. However, such teachers also reported that in their attempts to promote parental involvement, they faced two major problems: high illiteracy rates among the parent body; and reluctance to participate. Illiteracy, it was argued, limits meaningful parental involvement in academic matters, while parental reluctance to participate was attributed to failure by the system to educate and sensitize parents about their rights, roles and responsibilities regarding the education of their children. As one researcher observed:

"The teacher expressed disappointment that not many parents were interested in what goes on at school. They only come to the school as a reactionary measure, such as when a child does not take home a school report. The teacher argues that parental apathy or indifference is due to the fact that most of are not educated about their role and rights in the education of their children".

Those teachers who contested parental involvement were either driven by a firm belief in role differentiation, or values that were resistant to change. The former group saw each member of the educational system (teachers, parents, learners and the employer) as playing specific roles for the good of the entire school. Such roles, it was argued, are known, are distinct and should be respected: anything else amounts to interference in other peoples' affairs. Accordingly, it is concluded, parents should concentrate on their roles and leave teachers to do their professional part of educating the learners. The latter group, generally sees new policies, including one that requires an increasingly high level of parental involvement, as suspect and an interference. As one teacher reported, he had refused to be on the School Governing Body, as he did not want to find himself in a situation where he had to vote for a colleague to be dismissed. The following

comments by the teacher and researcher respectively, on some of the recent policies, illustrate the teacher's attitude to change:

[Teacher] "I have operated for eleven years with no code of conduct - why must I have one now"

[Researcher] "Very prickly and negative about changes such as the banning of corporal punishment and introduction of the code of conduct. Sees no reason for a code of conduct - sees it as a political motive to get rid of educators the government does not like".

Generally, most teachers participated in the induction of others into the profession, consulted with others teaching a similar subject within the same school, and respected other peoples' responsibilities as well as the authority therein. Equally, all teachers were well versed with the customs and values of the community within which the schools were situated. However, the concept of community was problematised by most of the teachers. Many of them did not live within the same locality as the schools in which they taught; they simply travelled to school and back home at the each day. Moreover, many students in some schools are day scholars who also stay far from schools. Thus the community is both culturally and geographically dispersed. Moreover, it was reported that even within geographically small communities, there were big differences in political values, largely patterned along political parties. While policy expects teachers to promote democratic values within the community, their actual participation is constrained by the factors mentioned above. One teacher, for instance showed a belief that ideas for community development should come from the community not the school. Further, another teacher who was said to be a firm believer in the hierarchical levels of socialisation, insisted that the inter-play between the two major socialising agents namely, family and school, must be carefully examined and appropriately exploited, for any meaningful impact of the school on value formation among learners.

It is evident, however, that teachers who worked and lived in communities whose values and customs were largely identical to their own were likely to demonstrate most of the competences underpinning this role, while the rest were likely to suffer perpetual value conflict. However, neither of them is likely to be an active implementer of policy whose values were out of phase with their own. The result is predictably ritualistic compliance to employer requirements. Overall, the foregoing analysis of the six educator roles leads to two major conclusions:

Among the six roles played by teachers, Mediator of Learning emerged as the strongest, while Designer of Learning Programmes was the weakest. However, none of the roles registered equal strengths or weaknesses among all competences underpinning it.

Teachers are very strong in foundational competences, but weak in reflexive competences. Thus while teachers know what to do or how to do it, they largely do not translate it into action, and where they do, they do not reflect on their actions for improving practice.

### 4.3 Emerging themes

In this section, we present a few themes that emerge from the analysis of the data.

#### 4.3.1 Value systems, interpretations and teacher effectiveness

*The teacher's own value system impacts on the effectiveness with which she plays certain roles.*

Evidence from the field suggests that there is a gap between what educators are *able* to do, what they *believe* they should do and what they *actually* do. Observations made on

teacher's role in the promotion of gender equality, participation in community development, enhancement of critical thinking and democratic practices as well as discipline among learners, are just some of the illustrative cases. Specifically, the table below highlights some of the most significant tensions and differences between policy and practice.

#### Tensions between policy and practice

Policy positions	Practices
Gender equality is promoted	Gender equality is inconsistent with cultural values
Emphasis on human rights; corporal punishment is prohibited	Corporal punishment is practised on an agreed basis, in some instances negotiated with the local community
Emphasis on pupil activity and group work	Teacher-talk in whole class situation predominates in the teaching/learning situation
Critical/creative thinking is encouraged	Critical and creative thinking is not valued in communities which place a premium on "culturally agreed" values and social consensus
Teacher-involvement in community development is encouraged	"Community" is conceptually contested and the practicality of community development problematised

*Differing interpretations of policy concepts and definitions impact on the effectiveness with which teachers play certain roles.*

As shown in the table above, the potential conflict between policy and practice does not only arise from differences in values, but also from meanings of concepts being subject to different interpretations: terms do not speak for themselves, as policy may assume. Teachers who contested the definition of community, and the one who listed scientific principles/formulae as examples of human rights are just a few of the illustrative cases.

### **4.3.2 School contexts and teacher effectiveness**

*The School Context has a profound influence on the way in which different educator roles and competences are made sense of prioritised and practised*

Such contexts will include school ethos, resources, management styles as well as the nature and level of community involvement.

With regard to ethos, there were contrasts between: schools that depicted a sense of purpose/order and those that did not and those where discipline seemed to be founded on trust, friendliness and respect, and those where it was founded on rule enforcement, monitoring and corporal punishment. Clearly, the ethos of a school influenced the way in which an effective teacher was defined and therefore the type of roles he played and the competences he practised. This was even reflected in the choice of teachers who participated in this study.

From the observations made in the field, it was discernible that the availability of resources (or lack of them) had clear implications for the possibilities and opportunities for teaching and learning. Lack of resources for example, placed constraints on the educator, and in the process some teaching and learning possibilities were either outrightly eliminated or largely hampered. For instance crowded/spacious classes in some schools or availability/lack of a laboratories in others, implied a form of pedagogy: whole-class teaching or group work; teacher demonstration or individual participation/ instruction.

Management structures and styles, on the other hand, influenced the way teachers either maintained or did not maintain a balance between: classroom instruction and nontimetabled activities; individual learner interests/abilities and completion of syllabus; permeability and non-permeability between teacher responsibilities.

Further, the nature and level of community involvement either constrained or complemented the teachers' roles, and therefore policy implementation. A teacher who believed in corporal punishment and who was working in a community which also supported it, practised it unreservedly. Conversely, those teachers who did not believe in corporal punishment but worked in a community that embraced it were labelled ineffective and suffered identity conflict.

### **4.3.3 Teacher effectiveness: role weighting and selection of competence**

*In practice, an effective teacher is not one who plays all of the six roles or demonstrates all of the competences underpinning each of the roles, but one who makes an appropriate weighting of the roles and a selection of competences in response to specific contexts.*

It was evident that not one of the teachers scored highly in *all* of the roles or competences. We have discussed the effect of school resources and ethos on the practicality of, and permeability and non-permeability between, particular teacher roles and responsibilities. Moreover, there were differences in emphasis on roles and competences among teachers in the same school but teaching different subjects. A number of fieldworkers reported that in interviews and informal discussions, teachers expressed concern about the wide range of roles and competences required. One teacher made the important point that real competence in all roles would "spread teachers too thin" and inevitably compromise the quality with which they carry out the most important roles. This same teacher believed that the roles were all essential, but that they should be provided by the *school*, not by each individual teacher. For many teachers, their primary responsibility is to get their students through exams, and roles and competences are (consciously or unconsciously) chosen and prioritised towards this end.

#### **4.3.4 Competency as a multi-dimensional concept**

*Generally, there is a **distinct lack of balance among** the three dimensions of competence: practical, foundational and reflexive. The weighting is heavily in favour of foundational and practical competence, while reflexive competence is hardly noticeable among the teachers.*

## Chapter 5

### Overview and implications of findings

In the previous chapter we presented a consolidated view of the policy/ practice "fit" with respect to the six major roles teachers are to be expected to play. On this basis we then inductively constructed four themes that reflect the nature of the interface between policy and practice. Against the backdrop of our analysis of policy (Chapter 2) and practice (Chapter 4) we now move into a broader discussion of findings. The findings already outlined are merged with issues that had *not* been built into the research instruments on the 6 roles, but which emerged as being significant during the course of the investigation.' This overview also links findings with the relevant literature.

In this Chapter, we draw out the essential characteristics of the policy model, examine the degree of "fit" between these essential characteristics and the themes emerging from practice which we identified in the previous chapter, then go on to discuss the tensions and dissonances we have found at the interface of policy and practice.

#### 5.1 Essential characteristics of the policy model

In the document analysis, the four policy documents were found to be generally coherent and internally consistent in promoting a defined set of roles and competences. In our view, the *Norms and Standards for Educators* provides the most useful, all-encompassing view of roles, and it subsumes those outlined in other documents. The general consistency within and amongst the documents allows us to draw out two essential characteristics of the policy model as a whole:

##### 5.1.1 The nature of professional responsibility: "extended professionalism"

Hoyle (1980) distinguishes usefully between "restricted" and "extended" professionalism. Characteristics of "restricted professionalism" are:

- teachers' thinking and practice are narrowly classroom based
- teachers' thinking is rooted in experience rather than theory
- classroom autonomy (in the sense of privacy) is valued
- responsibilities are restricted to the academic programme.

"Extended" professionalism involves:

- locating one's classroom teaching in a broader educational context
- comparing one's work with that of other teachers
- evaluating one's work systematically, and collaborating with other teachers
- Qualitative research typically raises new questions and issues.

- seeing teaching as a rational activity amenable to improvement on the basis of research and development (Hoyle, 1980 : 43).

From even a cursory reading of the 6 roles that policy expects teachers to fulfil, it is self-evident that the policy view is one of "extended" professionalism.

Linked to professional responsibility is the notion of responsibility for the curriculum. Marland (1978) suggests that the teacher's role in curriculum development is conveniently depicted in terms of their being "curriculum receivers", curriculum modifiers", "curriculum developers" and "curriculum researchers".

Again, a cursory reading of the 6 roles leaves little doubt that policy casts teachers into the roles of "curriculum developers" and "curriculum researchers". These curriculum roles nest very comfortably within "extended" professionalism.

### **5.1.2 The model of accountability: a democratic, developmental model**

The activity of Appraisal is normally associated most directly with teacher accountability. Two typologies of accountability are proposed by Kelly (1989: 214):

- One model is "instrumental, utilitarian, hierarchical and bureaucratic". The "bureaucratic" model tends to be non-negotiable, is implemented by management, and is essentially concerned with measures that demonstrate value for money, more bang for your buck, and benchmarking. Its emphasis is on "zero defect".
- The second model is an "intrinsic, democratic or professional model". The "democratic" model is aimed at improving practice by making the most of teachers and by extending them. This would be achieved in a consultative way that entailed a high degree of staff "ownership" of the appraisal process.

The highly-sophisticated, ELRC-approved Appraisal model and its processes go far beyond the narrow, instrumental accountability of the "bureaucratic" model and embrace a developmental thrust that is consistent with the "Democratic" model.

In sum, policy documents construct the teaching role as one of "extended" professionalism, in which teachers are "curriculum developers" and "curriculum researchers"; and this role is underpinned by a "democratic" form of appraisal intended to function as a developmental process.

## **5.2 The "fit" between policy and teacher practice**

The roles of educators, as outlined in policy are neat, contractual, defined, and orderly; in practice they are social, negotiated, and dynamic. Policy suggests uniformity; but in practice, where teachers were performing the same roles, there were marked qualitative differences in the various ways in which roles were being carried out. In these terms, differences between intention and

practice correspond to the distinction Keddie (1971) draws between the "educationist" context and the "teacher" context. In the "educationist" context, which has a strong resemblance to policy, teachers are able to outline their pure educational philosophies in a way that is unencumbered by the pervasive reality of the social world of the classroom. In the "teacher" context, teachers cope as best they can with situational constraints, and make the most of what opportunity exists for realising their beliefs as "educationists". In certain contexts, the scope for realising "educationist" beliefs is severely circumscribed. The "ideal" is not always in accord with the "real".

What follows is our attempt to compare "ideal educationist" policy with "real teacher" practice.

### **5.2.1 "Restricted" professionalism**

The previous chapter indicated that the effective teachers in the sample appeared to be strongest in the role of "Mediator of Learning", and, consistent with this, strongest also in the Foundational and Practical competences.<sup>9</sup> They appeared to be least strong as "Designers of Learning Programmes", and in the Reflexive competences.

The picture presented in Chapter 4 was one of a limited "fit" between policy and practice. Findings indicated that even where the policy/practice "fit" was good, it could not be understood without close reference to complex qualifying and even dissonant factors. A number of tensions between policy and practice were also identified. On this basis, it is now argued that the closest policy/practice "fit" was at the level of "restricted" professionalism.

Although there were a number of marked differences between the individuals comprising the 10 "effective" teachers in our sample, the lack of a strong showing with respect to Reflexive roles implies that the teachers represented "restricted" professionalism rather than the "extended" professionalism inherent in policy expectation. The following table reflects only two of the clear differences between the "extended" professionalism of policy, and the "restricted" professionalism of practice:

It should not be surprising that the best collective "fit" between policy and practice was evident in "Mediator of Learning": teaching and learning are, after all, the central purpose of the school (and were a central characteristic of the "resilient" schools described in Christie, 1997).

## Views of professionalism in policy and practice

"Extended" professionalism (policy)	"Restricted" professionalism (examples of practice)
Teaching is seen as a rational activity amenable to improvement on the basis of research and development.	As "Lifelong Learners", teachers were well versed in new policy (eg. OBE) but showed little evidence of teaching reflectively, eg: "His attitude did not reveal a desire to reflect on or analyse his own teaching" (Fieldworker's notes). There is a link with the teacher as a "curriculum receiver" here - teachers in our sample appeared to be lifelong learners to the extent that they were "policy and research receivers".
Teachers evaluate their work systematically, and collaborate with other teachers.	"It is assumed that several years of teaching experience meant that no serious preparation was necessary" (Fieldworker's notes). Collaboration with other teachers was subject specific and sharing occurred for pragmatic rather than developmental reasons: "... vertical integration within subjects rather than horizontal integration between subjects...[may] ... reinforce walls rather than bridges of social and professional identity among educators"(Fieldworker's notes).

Similarly, fieldwork yielded convincing illustrations of the ways in which practice has a strong affinity with "restricted" professionalism. One such example from Chapter 4 is the statement that: "Evidence from the field suggests most teachers are engaged in the implementation of provided programmes but not the design of original ones." This resonates strongly with Marland's conceptual category of "curriculum receiver".

Other parallels could be cited, but this would become tedious. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that it is appropriate to conceptualise teacher practice as "restricted" professionalism, and to note that it is at the level of "restricted" professionalism that policy and practice are most in accord with one another. In summary, our comparison of policy and teacher practice reveals the following disjuncture:

Policy requirements	Teacher practice
"extended" professionalism	"restricted" professionalism
curriculum developers and researchers	curriculum receivers
strong practical, foundational and reflexive competences	strong practical and foundational competences, but weak reflexive competences

## 5.2.2 The selection of roles and "something extra"

If as we have argued above, the roles required by policy describe an "extended" professional, one would assume that a teacher who fulfills all 6 roles and possesses all 48 competences would necessarily be an effective teacher. However, inference based on observation of teachers at work leads us to believe that it is possible for a teacher to exhibit most of the defined competences, and still not be (in our opinion) an effective teacher. In the previous chapter, we discussed the importance of the weighting and selection of roles and competences if teachers are to respond appropriately to their specific contexts. This ability to creatively choose and prioritise roles is far more important than obedience to all policy requirements. Moreover, we believe that a good teacher is *more* than the sum of the parts described by the designated roles.

When we began to try and understand exactly what it was that effective teachers demonstrated over and above competence in the given roles, we initially defined it as "*something extra*". If this is suitably vague, if not mystical, there is at least some support for the indefinable in the literature. Barber (1995) provides an interesting discussion based on the book *Wrinkles in Time* (Smoot 1993). The book deals with what happened in the first two trillionths of a second after the Big Bang set the universe in place. Smoot maintains that we know less than 10% of the universe. The rest is dark matter, which may not even obey the laws of physics. What has this to do with teaching? Barber argues that we know as little about the teaching universe as we do about the physical universe. Yet we try to organise teaching on the basis of "educational laws" that do not exist. He maintains that we simply do not have answers to the most important questions like: "How are some teachers able to make impressions on the lives of young people, to generate sparks of learning, and to encourage learners to use their minds?"

So what is "something extra"? When all else fails, go back to the data (or try reading the manual)! Here is an excerpt from field notes:

The History teacher is very much in control, but courteous ("May I have your attention please?") invites learner participation ("Any opinion on this issue?") gives learners time to think (there are silences) and learners trust him enough to take a few risks ("What did the previous government call black people?" Learner, after a moment's silence, and with a tentative smile: "Kaffirs". Class chuckles quietly with a few sideways looks at the 2 white fieldworkers in the class. The correct answer is then elicited - Bantu.) Learners are made to feel that they had important contributions to make, eg. teacher to learner: "Thank you, Precious, for reminding me." Small courtesies, eg. picking up pen that a learner had dropped. "I suggest that you complete this exercise this afternoon." Learners understood the hidden imperative perfectly.

Firstly, at an individual level, the teacher had an engaging personality, a vitality, an interest in what he was doing, and an interest in the learners as human beings. He demonstrated an obvious and unembarrassed enjoyment in interacting with learners. Learners listened to him and took him seriously. Like some of the other teachers in the sample, with no indication of authoritarianism or repression, he was in control of proceedings. Learners appeared to accept and trust him, and mutual respect was evident. He had a "presence" that one thought would make his authority

difficult if not inappropriate to challenge. In sum, teacher and learners seemed to have shared understandings; participants knew the informal rules and boundaries, and accepted these. Despite our impression that the "something extra" is a crucial element in the repertoire of roles that constitute effectiveness, we confess that capturing and articulating the concept is frankly beyond us at this stage. The most we venture is to suggest that in Bernstein's terms, we are describing "achieved" as opposed to "ascribed" status. In other words, the teacher is trusted and respected as an individual in her own right. The source of her moral authority is not derived or bestowed on the basis of her merely being a teacher. In more formal Bernsteinian terms, the control relationship is "interpersonal" rather than "positioned" (1996: 99).

One of the teachers whom we interviewed also provided a clue as to the elusive nature of "something extra" by referring to teachers who are "not called", implying that these were the teachers whose main preoccupation was simply to be on payroll<sup>10</sup>. By contrast, a "called" teacher would be one for whom professional commitment and a sense of vocation is intrinsic. A "called" teacher might not necessarily be effective, but it is hard to imagine a truly effective teacher who does not have some sense of calling.

Notwithstanding our inability to define "something extra", we do not believe that an achieved, inter-personal control relationship can be fully disaggregated or apprehended by means of description of discrete roles. Nor can the sincerity of a "calling" be captured by policy criteria, no matter how carefully such criteria might be described.

### 5.2.3 The question of teacher control

A central area of concern to teachers that is underplayed in policy is *control*. The preamble to the NDOE *Duties and Responsibilities* document, referring to the changing role of the educator, stresses the "shift from control to leadership". But in our analysis of policy and in drawing up the research instrument (see Appendix A), we found a fuzziness around the concept of control. We found a great deal of confusion between the roles of "leadership", "management" and "administration" and little clarity or consistency among the documents as to what might constitute appropriate forms of control.

"Control first" is the most important maxim traditionally drummed into every novice teacher as part of her informal induction into school life. It comes as no surprise to read that in the *Sunday Times* Top 100 Schools Survey, many of the schools attributed their success to an emphasis on

<sup>10</sup> In the literature there is strong evidence that for many teachers teaching is a second choice at best (see Jessup, 1997). While the teachers in our sample evinced strong commitment to their profession, some of them indicated that in the case of some of their peers it was a situation that one would suspect anyway - that for many, teaching may have been a choice taken because of inadequate career counselling, the availability of bursary loans to make tertiary study possible, as a route to social mobility, or simply as a secure haven of employment.

discipline. and even corporal punishment. Similarly, in reporting on "resilient" schools. Christie and Potterton note that: "In all cases. the resilient schools we visited had consistent disciplinary practices, sometimes peculiar to themselves. ... Some spoke frankly about the use of corporal punishment ..." (1997: 17).

Our own small-scale study confirms the continued existence of robust disciplinary practices. Notwithstanding its illegality, corporal punishment is alive and well. In less overt ways, the teachers in our sample stressed the importance of control. Here, for example is an excerpt from fieldnotes reporting an interview with a Science teacher:

The other important part of being effective <sup>11</sup> is his organisation - he believes that you have to keep learners busy to maintain control <sup>12</sup> and you can only do that if you are very well prepared and organised - otherwise learners pick up your uncertainty, exploit it and you lose control. He also sees his 'people skills' as important - feels that he has learned to deal with young people, has learned to balance providing individual attention with 'crowd control'.

The relationship between teachers and learners is essentially one of conflict, and there is bargaining over control: "teaching is a tension-filled, chancy process" (Geer, 1971). Is there sufficient acknowledgement of this in documentation? We doubt it, and it is too important an issue to be fudged in policy. The problem, as Jansen (1997) points out, is that OBE makes the extraordinary claim that it will transform social relationships in the classroom - learners will take responsibility for their learning and there will be co-operative relationships. This antiseptic view of the teacher/ learner relationship is implicit in other policy documents, where the basic element of control in the pedagogical relationship tends to be rather euphemised in terms like 'classroom management'. In our own instrument it was: "learners are actively involved in the learning process". If the importance of teachers being in control is to be taken seriously, and from theory and practice <sup>13</sup> there is compelling evidence to show that it should, then policy needs to confront this issue head-on. Otherwise, the gap that currently exists between the indecisive policy view of control and the actual practices of control in classrooms, will probably remain.

Our analysis of the fit between policy and the practice of individual teachers cannot be divorced from context. (For example, the History teacher described above as a teacher who has "something extra" worked in a school whose ethos was characterised by a powerful consensual definition of the situation and respective roles within it.) The role of the school in facilitating a fit between policy and practice is essential, and will be dealt with in the next section.

<sup>11</sup> The first major factor in effectiveness was said to be experience.

<sup>12</sup> "Busyness" was the key strategy of control identified in Sharp and Green's well-known case study of "progressive" primary schools (1976).

<sup>13</sup> A case study such as Denscomb (1981) provides a vivid account of the centrality of control in teachers' thinking and practice. The respected writer John Eliot (1998) goes so far as to write of the 'culture of teaching' being based on fear of children.

### **5.3 The influence of school culture on the fit between policy and practice**

We have argued, based on our findings, that the collectivity of policy roles do not necessarily add up to an effective teacher. and that it would not be possible for every teacher to perform every role without compromising the quality of some of them. We agree with the teacher who pointed out that collectively. the policy roles appear to cover what happens in effective schools, rather than what an effective individual teacher does. The question then arises: If schools as organisations are also to take responsibility for meeting the requirements of policy, to what extent do they assist or hinder teachers in carrying out their roles? Two points merit development here: firstly, the influence of school context on role allocation and role selection; and secondly, the influence of school culture on the social definition of roles.

#### **5.3.1 Role allocation or role selection**

As we have already discussed, particular roles assume much greater importance in certain contexts. In a very real way, circumstances circumscribe the possibility of teachers fulfilling particular roles. For example, in under-resourced schools, teachers are thrown entirely on their own resources. Lack of physical provision makes it impossible for them to exercise certain roles, and makes them very reliant on others. The effect of constraints imposed by lack of resources is more easily appreciated as a result of personal experience than through description. We encountered the physical starkness of some classrooms: no electricity, very few books, some stationery. but really just four dingy walls, a chalkboard, chairs, desks, and a teacher. Teachers can be effective in these settings, and our fieldwork bore testimony to this, but the context unquestionably makes them heavily reliant on teacher talk or verbal interchange with learners. In some physical contexts, then, certain roles are virtually "given" to teachers, and others are virtually denied.

Roles are also distributed across the staff of a school in terms of its own division of labour. The division of labour is much more complex in better-resourced schools. In these schools certain designated roles are the responsibility of specialists. For instance, one of the roles in our research instrument is "keeps complete and comprehensive student academic records" (category 25). In well-resourced schools these are fed into a computer by a specialist administrator; and there are other administrative roles such as fee collection, control of stock and so on (category 24) which are managed by specialists who are more likely to be administrative staff than teachers. Similarly, many other routine operations such as photocopying are carried out by specialists in the better-resourced schools, and these activities are carried out in terms of rules and contract. Counselling presents a particularly interesting aspect of the division of labour as policy has now incorporated the activities associated with it into the Pastoral Role of the teacher (see especially Categories 12, 18 and 19 of the Classroom Observation Schedule which cover liaison with parents, social and educational problems, learner counselling and career guidance). Despite

financial constraints, these roles are still carried out by the specialist counsellor in the better-resourced schools. In such a case, these roles have not been merely inaccessible to most teachers: they have kept safe for the specialist by professional interests. As a protected professional zone, Counselling has not only kept the "lay" teacher out of the field, but the high status aura surrounding it has created the kind of mystique that signals to "ordinary" teachers that they do not have the expertise to enter the field. Our sample yielded instances of teachers believing that counselling-related activities were the responsibility of the specialist.

### **5.3.2 The social definition of roles**

Earlier discussion on the theme of "School contexts and teacher effectiveness" (Chapter 4) will have laid the groundwork for the argument that roles were most easily fulfilled in schools where there appeared to be a common definition of the situation, a shared framework of assumptions about the purpose of the school, a value consensus. The most powerful form of consensus will include learner acceptance of certain boundaries within an established framework even where this is not formally defined. Our observations and interviews led us to believe that teachers in a school with shared understandings are in a strong position to be effective and to exercise appropriate roles if there is social agreement about respective roles within the school.

The best illustration of school consensus was presented at a school assembly in what was arguably the most resource-deprived school in our sample. The great majority of learners arrived on time and quietly arranged themselves in orderly rows. A few late-comers quickly took their places. The staff stood behind the principal who addressed the assembly in a relaxed, conversational and engaging manner. When he had finished, and began walking away, the assembly began singing in unison. What was striking about this scene was the absence of overt control - no controlling staff, no "prefects", no accompaniment or direction for the singing, and none of the instruments of control like sirens or megaphones. To those accustomed to a standard pattern of overtly-controlled patterns of learner speech and movement, this event posed a question: Where was the puppeteer who was pulling the invisible strings?<sup>14</sup>

We conclude that consensus about the purpose of the school was in fact the unseen hand. There was further evidence of this in the movement of learners and in the classes we attended. One of the teachers was asked why learners did not appear to have to be disciplined in an overt way, and about the fact that the school seemed to run on shared understandings

Fieldworker: "What makes this school work?"

Teacher: "It just does. It's the culture."

<sup>14</sup> This image is borrowed from Berger (1961). It is important here to stress that although the example of this school may be unusually striking, it does not appear to be an idiosyncratic school. One of the other schools was described as "a busy school with a well-defined sense of purpose". Another was described as a school characterised by respect, friendliness and trust. Authority structures were easily accepted, and there was a sense of school community (within a broader community), a sense of comfort with roles and relationships.

We find the explanation convincing. But of course, culture is an elusive and ambiguous concept. In this context we do not see it as a set of characteristics sometimes imputed to particular social or ethnic groups, members of which "bring" it to school. While the culture of the home and community has a potency that cannot be disputed, the key issue here seems to be the way in which home and community beliefs and attitudes are woven into the fabric of everyday school life. This process is well captured in the following theoretical description:

Cultures ... develop when people come together for specific purposes. ... People develop between them distinctive forms of life - ways of doing things and not doing things, forms of talk and speech patterns, subjects of conversation, rules and codes of conduct and behaviour, values and beliefs, arguments and understandings. These will not be formally regulated, but heavily implicit. One's part in them may not be consciously recognized. Rather one grows into them, and may recognize them as a natural way of life (Woods, 183: 8).

The key element in all of this is a common definition of roles. This definition will embrace beliefs about the fundamental elements of school life such as a view of knowledge, the idea of what a teacher is, what teaching is, what it means to be a learner, the nature of appropriate authority relationships, and so on. Views on these issues seemed to underpin teacher practice in a number of the most important roles in the "Mediator of Learning" role (eg. numbers 2,4,5,7,8, and 11 of the Classroom Observation Schedule).<sup>15</sup>

The inter-relationship between the individual teacher and school culture was illustrated in a significant way by the contrast afforded by one particular school which unlike the others did not appear to have a consensual school culture. Of the seven schools, this one appeared to have the weakest sense of purpose (as well as a declining pass rate, a problem of learner lateness, and an apparent lack of team spirit). There was little observed or reported broader community interaction, and corporal punishment was more overt: "uses the stick to thrash students on the hand at the gate when students are late" (Fieldworker's notes). Despite these measures, there was a lot of noise in the school, and absenteeism seemed to be rife. It was here that researchers encountered teachers who felt threatened and defensive about the research project.<sup>16</sup> This attitude contrasts with the openness of teachers in other schools.

Although the six schools were very different, there was some evidence of a correlation between the culture of the school and the work of the teacher. One interesting element of correlation was evident in a seeming relationship between school orderedness and the way in which the effectiveness of a teacher is defined. At one school which was not very ordered, the good teacher was one "who teaches in spite of the shortages of books and resources" (Fieldworker's notes). At another, teachers knew they were there to teach - this was part of their common definition of the

<sup>15</sup> Certainly, a category like number 8 ("Creates a democratic, but disciplined classroom atmosphere, where learners are actively involved in the learning process") would seem to be unattainable for the individual teacher if the general school climate were not supportive.

<sup>16</sup> One them also expected monetary compensation in return for co-operation.

situation embedded in the culture of the school. It seems then that effective teaching despite the odds can be seen either as a norm, or a sign of exceptionality. Are higher levels of expectation translated into higher levels of performance? This would be a question for further research to address. However, it was notable that in the "Mediator of Learning" role, the teacher in the school where "effective teachers teach despite shortages", *teach is* exactly what they did. They lectured relentlessly, with little contact, and with little feedback to the learner. It was notable that the task-directed focus on the Instrumental order" (and the teacher's subject knowledge was excellent) was accompanied by corresponding neglect of the Expressive order.<sup>18</sup> Counselling and pastoral care did not appear to be areas of concern or priority.

By contrast, at a third school, one which projected a strong sense of cohesion and community, the roles of "Mediator of learning" and "Pastoral care" were accorded priority. Effective teaching was believed to occur when the teacher knew the subject well *and* did "some spiritual work" (Business Economics teacher) with the learners, and imparted morals. The *Umfundisi* is also a good role model.<sup>19</sup>

The import of this discussion is to suggest that teacher roles are not prescribed by policy alone: they are also socially defined. In schools where there was a common definition of the situation, the work of the teacher in playing particular roles appeared to be less problematic. Teaching in schools where there is a common definition of the situation (or a common culture) may not be "easier" for a teacher - in fact it may be a lot more work for the teacher - but the nature of the roles does at least appear to be clear cut. This naturally has implications for teacher development and appraisal, and these issues will be discussed later. It also raises the possibility of a disjunction between the way in which a particular community defines roles, and the way in which policy defines roles, and this is the question we turn to next.

<sup>17</sup> "the transmission of conduct, character and manner" (Bernstein, 1996:97).

<sup>18</sup> "the transmission of specialised skills" (Bernstein, 1996: 97).

<sup>19</sup> This is not to suggest that teachers are thrust into a deterministic situation in which their roles are predetermined and "given" to them. Teachers clearly play a major role in sustaining definitions of the situation. In outlining Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism, Blumer provides a useful view of how a common definition of the situation develops and is sustained:

... human group life takes on the character of an ongoing process - a continuing matter of fitting developing lines of conduct to one another. The fitting together of the lines of conduct is done through the dual process of definition and interpretation. This dual process operates to sustain established patterns of joint conduct .... Established patterns of group life exist and persist only through the continued use of the same schemes of interpretation; and such schemes of interpretation are maintained only through their continued confirmation by the defining acts of others. It is highly important to recognise that the established patterns of group life do not just carry on by themselves but are dependent for their continuity on recurrent affirmative definitions. Let the interpretations that sustain them be undermined or disrupted by changed definitions from others and the patterns can quickly collapse (Blumer, 1971: 18-19).

## 5.4 The question of "community", accountability and equity

The main motif in the first two themes discussed in Chapter 4 ("Value systems and teacher effectiveness", and "School contexts and teacher effectiveness") was *difference* between contexts, and between individual practice. We found differing value systems, and differing constraints and opportunities within particular contexts. While there may be an analytic distinction between what teachers do because of their values, and what they do because circumstances leave them little choice, empirically there is only practice. And, as we have seen, there were *differing* practices. Some of the practices we encountered in classrooms were in accord with policy, and others not. If one extends this analysis of difference so as to consider policy more broadly, one notes a potential conflict between constitutional principles and the implications of the Schools Act. The foundation of the Schools Act is the concept of community. Power and responsibility are devolved to local communities. But our fieldwork led us to ask the question: Who, or where, is "the community"?

### 5.4.1 The concept of community

While policy makes frequent reference to community and stakeholder participation, we feel that it does not accommodate the diversity of contexts and value systems that such participation will invite. One reason for this is that policy tends to reify, and perhaps idealise, the concept of community. In our analysis, policy assumes a community to be:

- geographically identifiable
- cohesive and consensual with a clear set of "values and customs"
- holding values that accord with those of policy
- interested and actively involved as education stakeholders

Our findings on the teacher's "Community and Citizen Role" (as discussed in Chapter 4) suggest that, in contrast to policy assumptions, the communities that feed schools are often:

- *geographically dispersed*

There is often no clearly identifiable geographic community other than the community within the school itself. For example, how does one delineate a community where learners and teachers catch two taxis on their way to school?<sup>20</sup>

- *characterised by fragmentation and difference*

Clearly, a geographically dispersed community will not be a cohesive or consensual unit. Some schools do build a particular kind of reputation which attracts like-minded people

<sup>20</sup> It might be assumed that this form of serial commuting to school is uni-directional, ie. from townships to inner cities or to ex-model C type schools only. Our sample included a peri-urban/ rural school whose enrolment - which had built on its good reputation - included learners catching taxis from town

from far and wide. for example: one of the rural schools we visited had a number of students from the city whose parents approved of the "traditional" approach to education on which the school had built its reputation. But this sense of community relies on the school having a strong school culture. and we have seen that not all schools have this. Our findings also revealed that even where a geographically identifiable community does exist, there are still important differences within it.

- *opposed to some of the values and principles promoted by policy*

In some schools there was an acute disjunction between the liberal values underlying policy and the values of the community, particularly in cases where the community bore some resemblance to the cohesive community envisaged by the Schools Act. The most rural school in our sample had a tightly-knit community of which teachers were part, and it was here where a number of value positions were in a state of marked tension with policy.

- *not used to seeing themselves as education stakeholders*

Many teachers in our sample referred to the reluctance of illiterate and/or uneducated parents to play an active role in their children's schooling. In one semi-rural setting it was very clear that parents believed their role came to end when they had delivered their child to the school, and paid the fees. Beyond this point, their contribution was said to be one of praying for success at examination time.

There is thus evidence to suggest that real communities do not match the imagined communities of policy. Policy adopts a consensus view of communities and assumes that they will lend support to policy values. Our findings show, to the contrary, that communities are seldom consensual and that, ironically, where they are most cohesive and consensual, they are also most likely to question certain policy values. If schools and educators are accountable to both the authors of policy and to their local communities, this dual accountability is bound to cause conflict and uncertainty.

#### **5.4.2 The question of accountability**

We have suggested that policy adopts a consensus view of schools and society.<sup>21</sup> Underlying assumptions of the consensus view are that norms and values are universal and uncontested, and that policy will operate in a homogeneous society. South African society is manifestly not

<sup>21</sup> Policy naturally has to create uniform conditions for all citizens, but then policy could have been based on recognition of the plural nature of our society. The aim of nation building, for example, does not necessarily have to be premised on a belief that homogeneity exists. Has the terrible experience of apartheid made *us* too wary of recognising diversity? Concessions to plurality are, however, built into the implementation phase of policy. There is flexibility in the Appraisal criteria, ie. core, optional, and additional, the latter two being decided by panels. This allows for "accommodation of the contextual diversities of educational institutions within which it *will* be implemented" (Chapter 2).

homogenous, as we have discussed above. Therefore, inevitably, teacher accountability to both policy and community will throw value conflicts into sharp relief. This in itself is not a bad thing - value-systems are seldom fixed and contestation and debate are healthy. What concerns us, however, is the suspicion that dual accountability and value conflict will be a problem for some schools and not for others, and that the lines along which these schools are divided match too closely the lines of privilege and status along which schools under apartheid education were divided.

Based on our findings, we draw on the following example to illustrate our point: In the case of a community holding values consonant with, for example,

- upholding gender equality and human rights;
- upholding the prohibition on corporal punishment;
- extending pupil activity and group work;
- critical / creative thinking,

then accountability to both policy and the community is not likely to present many problems.

If, however, a local community

- sees gender equality as a challenge to its culture;
- approves of corporal punishment;
- does not value critical and creative thinking because the community itself places a premium on "culturally agreed" values and social consensus, then there is a clear basis for a conflictual relationship between policy and the community, with schools and teachers caught in the middle. Our fieldwork provided instances of exactly this sort of tension.

### 5.4.3 Implications for equity and social justice

Although our sample is too small for anything but impressionistic observations, it did appear as if the image of a school implicit in policy corresponds very closely to a particular kind of school. This image is very similar to the ex-model C-type school. In the following table (reproduced from Chapter 4) for example, the policy-favoured positions in the left hand side of the table seem to reside much more comfortably in the historically-privileged schools.

Policy positions	Practices
Gender equality is promoted	Gender equality is inconsistent with cultural values
Emphasis on human rights; corporal punishment is prohibited	Corporal punishment is practised on an agreed basis, in some instances negotiated with the local community
Emphasis on pupil activity and group work	Teacher-talk in whole class situation predominates in the teaching/learning situation
Critical/creative thinking is encouraged	Critical and creative thinking is not valued in communities which place a premium on "culturally agreed" values and social consensus

Both values and levels of resourcing appear to be relevant factors here. The effects of levels of resourcing are reasonably predictable and tangible. So, for example, we were not surprised to encounter, in a rural school that did not have electricity, a Business Economics teacher struggling to teach learners about computers in business. (This difficulty was compounded by the fact that learners had absolutely no experience of the first world market economy covered in the syllabus, but this is a curriculum issue rather one of resourcing.) It was also noted that in some settings where classes are large and basic requirements such as textbooks are not available, alternatives to orthodox pedagogy, such as teacher-talk, were difficult to achieve. There is a danger, then, that policy will make disreputable the kinds of practices that a number of teachers in fact carried out effectively.

Fieldwork yielded some unexpected examples of how advantaged schools are better positioned to manage the consequences of particular values built into policy. One such example is the maintenance of discipline, an issue which emerged as a major concern in all schools. Teachers felt that corporal punishment had been abolished, but policy had put nothing in its place. One of the schools we visited had found a partial solution: negative sanction in the form of withholding privilege. This took the form of miscreants being denied access to the popular "Internet Club". Poor schools have few privileges to withhold, and more severe forms of discipline and control are an inevitable recourse.

Material deprivation disadvantages teachers and learners regardless of the particular system of education in place. However, we feel that the new policy roles pose a particular set of problems, both substantive and symbolic, in poorly-resourced schools.

A number of commentators have observed that previously massive inequalities between schools have further widened in recent years. Our study has produced a number of suggestions that if there is no clear implementation or development strategy, policy on teachers' roles appears unlikely to arrest this disturbing trend.

This problem will be compounded if policy collapses into a narrow, instrumental accountability model. As Elliot (1976) has observed, when a school performs badly, even though this poor performance may be attributed to factors of intake, such as social class, the "accountability" view may result in reduced resource allocations. Social justice, of course, would require the opposite. While present resourcing policy is designed as an equalising arrangement, this could come under threat if the model were reduced to one of narrowly-conceived accountability. The likelihood of this possibility increases in a context in which there is a demonstrable need to reduce costs.

## Chapter 6

### Recommendations for the implementation of policy

This final chapter discusses some of the recommendations and possible implications for the implementation of policy which emerge from the findings of this study. These are certainly not prescriptive, but reflect the directions in which the findings seem to point. The research team understood that the purpose of the research was to provide information for policy makers whose responsibility it is to decide what action to take. The recommendations are tentative and are couched within detailed discussion. At various points of this report, issues are left in the form of unresolved questions. The final section of this chapter attempts to draw together some important issues for further research.

Bearing in mind that the present research was a small-scale project of broad scope and limited sample, we wish to emphasise the importance of further research in this important and complex field. We believe that this chapter should not be seen as one which makes definitive claims, but rather one that attempts to open up the field and to identify issues worthy of further and deeper investigation. Rather than littering the discussion with disclaimers about the tentativity of our analysis, we prefer to make one such blanket statement at the outset. The discussion on recommendations is tentative!

The chapter focuses on four recommendations:

The first two suggestions concern the way in which teachers will encounter policy.

- The first suggestion is that the policy criteria and different documents are consolidated into a policy guide for teachers, which should be accessible and which places emphasis on the developmental aspect of the policy.
- The second suggestion concerns how the appraisal process will be implemented in schools. To avoid a simplistic, technicist approach to appraisal, plans need to be made to ensure that the process retains its important development function.
- The third suggestion concerns both teacher development and school development. It is suggested that teacher development needs to enable teachers to reflect on their own ideologies and beliefs about the activity of teaching. Teacher development cannot be divorced from the context within which they work, and thus school development, with a particular focus on school culture, should also be taken into account.
- The fourth suggestion concerns a number of ideas for possible further research in this field.

## 6.1 How will educators encounter policy?

Despite democratic intentions and union involvement in policy development, it is very likely that teachers will experience policy definition of their expected roles as a centre-periphery model. This carries particular attendant dangers. Studies of the implementation of a centre-periphery model from other settings indicate a likelihood of policy "not so much being 'implemented' in schools as being 'recreated'" (Ball and Bowe, 1992: 114). The danger of "recreation" becomes particularly acute when, as in the present case, four different policy documents are in question. A *fragmented* centre-periphery model would be a good deal more problematic than a centre-periphery model in the matter of implementation.

Without a clear implementation strategy which familiarises teachers with policy, there is likely to be a situation in which folklore predominates. Idiosyncratic understanding will be filtered, distilled, interpreted, and misinterpreted as it percolates through communities of practitioners.<sup>22</sup>

How teachers become familiar with the expected roles in the four documents is thus a crucial question.<sup>23</sup> The single policy that teachers will inevitably encounter is the Appraisal process. At a conceptual level this would be unfortunate. In Chapter 2 it was pointed out that the *Norms and Standards* serves the function of providing a system for the professional development of educators, and that of all the documents, it provides the most comprehensive and inclusive view of expected roles. It also provided the basis for the research instrument in the present project. It seems ironic that the most useful policy document is the one least likely to be encountered by practitioners.

In considering the attendant risks associated with teachers encountering only the Appraisal process, there is justification for drawing an analogy between on the one hand, the *Norms and Standards* and the concept of curriculum; and on the other, Educator Appraisal and the concept of assessment. There is a compelling literature on ways in which the curriculum dog is wagged by the assessment tail. Without a broad implementation plan which introduces policy to teachers, there would seem to be a serious danger of the Appraisal process dominating and stunting the vision of professional development in the *Norms and Standards*. This might seem to be a surprising claim, given the earlier judgement that the Appraisal document represented a democratic model with a strong developmental thrust. However, the *developmental* function of the policies depends crucially on a measure of reflexive competence on the part of practitioners. In our analysis of the practice of effective teachers in Chapter 4, it is precisely the reflexive competence that was found to be lacking. If teachers do not have the competence to apply policy

<sup>22</sup> This effect has been shown in a UK research project on the spread of information about accountability amongst secondary teachers. Poulson (1994) highlights the way in which meanings shifted according to specific contexts.

<sup>23</sup> In this regard it is worth noting that prior to this research we had come across senior education bureaucrats who had not heard of Curriculum 2005 months after it had been announced.

principles in a reflexive and developmental way, the policies are ultimately likely to serve only a regulative. "policing" function. This reinforces Harley and Parker's (forthcoming) point that the policies assume as already existing what they are trying to build - no matter how sophisticated, democratic and developmental the ELRC model might be, it is unlikely to serve the purposes of professional development if the reflexive competence is lacking in teachers' repertoires.

If teachers were indeed already lifelong learners familiar with the international literature on appraisal, they would in all likelihood have a distorted anticipation of the South African version. The concept and history of Appraisal aligns it with *accountability* rather than with *development* or improvement. In much of the literature, appraisal appears in the guise of a strict form of accountability, even an attempt on the part of government to reduce costs and fire teachers. For example. 1974 saw the first attempts in the USA to establish a legal base for demanding accountability. Accountability is expressed in a "managerial" discourse brought about by market ideology (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996), and managerialism turns accountability into state surveillance (Inglis. 1989, cited in Woods and Jeffrey, 1996). In an unguarded moment prior to the introduction of appraisal in the UK, the Secretary of State announced that appraisal was the means to "remove unsatisfactory teachers from a profession where they can do much harm" (Wragg *et al*, 1996: 9).

Even without our own education managers having committed this sort of disastrous faux *pas*, South African teachers, having been lectured to by politicians, and exposed to regular media reports on the state's need to reduce the education salary bill, could be forgiven for harbouring suspicions about intentions behind appraisal. The admirable and progressive developmental intentions of policy will count for little if these are not made apparent to teachers. Things perceived as real are real in their consequences, as W. I. Thomas (1928) reminds us. Suspicion is already present. In the previous chapter we recounted instances of this.

### **6.1.1. A consolidated guide to policy**

We suggest that thought be given to ways of introducing teachers to policy definition and expectation of their roles. We further suggest that this be done in a way that provides educators with a consolidated policy guide.<sup>24</sup>

If it is necessary to justify the argument that teachers should be exposed to a *consolidated* view of policy in the form of a guide, it is well to be reminded that definitions of teacher quality and of the 'good' teacher are social constructions subject to change at different historical moments (Troman, 1996: 33). Our research team undertook an intensive analysis in its efforts to engage with the construction of the teacher implicit in the roles outlined in the four policy documents,

<sup>24</sup> Without a consolidated view of policy and an implementation strategy it would be more appropriate to describe the process as one of mere 'law making' rather than of 'policy development'.

each of which approaches roles from a different perspective and vantage point <sup>25</sup> Educators simply do not have the luxury of time in which to do this.<sup>26</sup> Even if they did, there would doubtless be as many constructions of policy as there are teachers.

Perhaps the most important need for consolidated policy guide comes from the fact that the new vision of teachers' roles represents a fundamental dislocation with the past. Some of the expected new modes of operation are not just new techniques, or different ways of organising one's teaching, but represent fundamentally new ways of understanding one's work and the social relationships around which it revolves. New practices promoted by policy - especially in the context of outcomes-based education - are so fundamental a change that they challenge teacher identity (Harley and Parker, forthcoming).

On raising the following issues to be considered in a consolidated policy guide, we are aware of the danger of a policy guide recontextualising policy in such a way that it is not represented adequately, or worse, is subverted. But even if this were to happen, the consequences could be less damaging than if nothing were done, and if teachers recreated policy themselves through an informal policy trickle-down drift process. At least it is possible to update a policy guide. Moreover, the production of a policy guide could be a promising way of stimulating debate around policy and, most important of all, democratising it. Policy production by fully democratic means can be paralytically slow, but the interpretation of policy in policy guides is a way of casting policy into the public arena. Policy guide production could be regionalised. This might recontextualise policy discourse, but the more likely result would be a discourse that teachers recognised, and in this form the voice of the teacher could "speak" to policy.

If the need for a consolidated policy guide is accepted, it becomes necessary to comment on the form and content such a document might assume.

**(a) Underlying principles and detail of a consolidated policy guide**

The characteristics of the policy model (outlined in Chapter 5) could serve as a useful introduction to the basic principles underpinning policy. Interrogation of the concept of "extended" professionalism could provide a useful orientation to the technicalities, particularly if this questioned assumptions about knowledge, the teacher's role, and authority relationships.

<sup>25</sup> And we also had the advantage of direct access to the Chair of the Technical Committee which produced the Norms and Standards for Educators!

<sup>26</sup> Delamont (1976) usefully characterises the position of the teacher as one of "immediacy": especially when faced by large numbers of pupils, teachers are engaged in continual interpersonal interchanges in a way that allows little chance to reflect, and none to get a "second opinion". In the classroom, nothing never happens!

Since it is the appraisal process that teachers are likely to encounter most directly, it would be appropriate to lay stress on *development* as the essence of policy, which is:

- formative rather than summative
- democratic rather than bureaucratic.

In other words, we argue that the technical policy detail is of little use unless it is rooted in understanding of the underlying features of the paradigm.

In terms of specifics, the 48 categories subsumed under the 6 major roles in the Classroom Observation Schedule and Descriptive Matrix (Appendix B) might be utilised in suitably modified form. Fine-grained discussion about adaptation of the existing categories would be inappropriate in the present report, but we provide two examples of areas that we believe should be modified:

- (i) Category 8 : "Creates a democratic, but well-disciplined classroom atmosphere, where learners are actively involved in the learning process".

In its present form this category is an amalgamation of "democratic but disciplined" (from the *Norms and Standards for Teacher Education*, p. 80), and "where learners are actively involved in the learning process" (from the *Workload of Educators*, p. 12(f)). Fieldworkers suggested that these two parts should be separated. A potentially uneasy relationship also exists within the concept of "democratic but disciplined", and this is discussed in more detail presently.

- (ii) Category 18 : "Understands and responds to the social and educational problems in their school/ community context (eg. violence, drug abuse etc)"

This comes directly from *Norms and Standards for Teacher Education* (p. 86) as a practical competence: "Knowing of and being able to respond to ...". It raises the issue of the three competences : practical, foundational and reflexive. The assumption here is that if teachers know or understand (foundational) they will automatically do (practical). In our study it seemed that the majority of teachers understood the problems, but did not respond to them for a number of reasons (such as lack of time, not seeing it as their job, and in some cases, not believing they had the skills to do so).

Fieldworkers also raised a serious question about the weighting or relative emphasis of categories within the six roles. By implication, in their present form, all categories seem to carry equal weight and importance. But is, for example, "Performs one or more of fee collection, fire drill, first aid, time-tabling, controlling stock and equipment" (Category 24) as important as "Prepares [lessons] thoroughly" (Category 3) or "Has sound knowledge of subject content" (Category 1)?

One of the key debates about Outcomes-based Education is centred on the question of whether "holistic" or "atomistic" approaches should be followed. The Appraisal process is likely to be subject to a very similar debate. The Classroom Observation Schedule and Descriptive Matrix (Appendix B) developed for the present project is susceptible to a fragmented, atomistic,

checklist approach. We believe this tendency should be resisted very strongly indeed, but for the moment defer discussion on this point to the section on implementation that follows.

**(b) From "educationist" policy discourse to "teacher" discourse**

We suggest that a consolidated policy guide should be written in "teacher" discourse, which will be more accessible and understandable than the current policy discourse.

Here we use the term "discourse" in the sense of "ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge and the relations between them" (Foucault, cited in Weedon 1987: 108). Discourse is thus symbolically powerful, and it is an important constituent in the way teachers will "read" or interpret policy. Earlier we made reference to the "educationist" and the "teacher" context (Keddie, 1971). Policy is, naturally, presented in an "educationist" discourse. One might say that it is educationally "politically correct". While it is obvious that policy should signal its intentions by means of appropriate terminology, when a substantial shift in ways of understanding is at stake, there is a danger of presenting something alien to the majority of teachers.

We have already commented on dissonance between the value system of policy and those of some of teachers and/ or school community, and in Chapter 4, we commented on confusion about terminology. When differing value systems are involved, however, different understandings of terminology are likely to be more deep-seated than semantics. In such a case, practices advocated in policy may be at odds with teachers' tacit knowledge about teaching, or simply what they "know about teaching" derived from their socialisation into it.<sup>27</sup> There are also different ways of understanding the terminology. For example, category 2 of the Classroom Observation Instrument (Appendix B) reads "Uses appropriate learning/teaching strategies and resources". The strategies a teacher deems "appropriate" will depend largely on her own understandings and beliefs of what good teaching is. If a teacher believes that appropriate strategies are structured lecturing and individual work, this would be at contrary to the policy expectation. Policy will have a hard time of it if teachers perceive it to be alien to their ways of knowing teaching, or their tacit knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

Terminology as such was not something our fieldworkers sought to clarify with teachers. Nevertheless, the research experience persuades us that many teachers will not readily apprehend some of the present discourse. Shalem and Slonimsky (1998) believe that policy assumes that if criteria are specified or described in a detailed way, they will be understood. However, they say

<sup>27</sup> There is a large body of literature acknowledging the potency of teachers' tacit knowledge. It is frequently invoked as the reason for the failure of innovation.

<sup>28</sup> In an important recent study of 68 rural teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, Jessop (1997) reports that, in general, policies do not reach schools or even speak in the same "language" as teachers.

that one needs to be competent first, in order to "read" and understand the criteria. In order to use the criteria in a meaningful way, teachers need to understand the "internal connection of the practice", which simply providing or describing the criteria cannot create.

Due to present constraints, we discuss only two instances of "educationist" policy discourse which may beat odds with the tacit knowledge of many of our teachers. These two instances concern key roles in teaching: responsibility for managing learning, and responsibility for managing learners so that learning might take place.

### *Ways of interpreting the concept of "Mediator of learning"*

This is the title of the first of the six roles teachers are fulfil. What possible meanings could be imputed to this blanket term?

It is not impossible that teachers could read "Mediator of learning" in such a way as to imply that self-regulated learners are actually beaver away in classrooms, and that "mediation" is some sort of "add on", or "top up" process applied by teachers, or that the teacher perhaps introduces subtle shifts in the way in which knowledge is being constructed by learners. At worst, teachers might believe that policy is telling them that they should not take responsibility for managing learning. This is not an outlandish possibility. In the early 1970s in Britain a new orthodoxy that became known as "New Sociology of Education" declared that knowledge was a social construction, an invention. Knowledge was what powerful groups defined as knowledge, and teachers were the hapless agents. This paralysed teachers - if knowledge was just a socio-historical construct, what criteria were available for teachers to decide what was worthwhile knowledge, and what they should teach? (see Whitty, 1985). In our own context, the official promotional documents on OBE have emphasised learner activity so strongly, and contrasted this with teacher domination in such a crudely dichotomous way, that teachers could be forgiven for becoming paralysed into inactivity, believing that the teacher has to be passive and/or inactive. Does the term "mediator of learning" really give an adequate indication of the extent to which teachers must plan and even stage manage democratic, activity-based learning if it is to be successful? If teachers do not plan activity-based learning very carefully indeed, purposeful learning is jeopardised, and outcomes-based an extreme unlikelihood.<sup>29</sup>

If teachers read the term "mediator of learning" as one implying that teacher directiveness is a bit disreputable, the consequences in under-resourced schools could be demoralising. In some of the schools in our sample teachers had no resources other than themselves. We saw some absolutely conventional, teacher-directed lessons that were nevertheless effective. One does not need to comment on likely consequences if policy undermined the confidence of teachers in presenting good teacher-directed lessons, even with lots of

<sup>29</sup> Case study research indicates that unmanaged "discovery" or activity-based learning is chaotic, as one of Delamont's aptly-titled articles - "Mock ups and cock ups" - suggests:.

teacher talk, when there is little alternative to this practice. A mis-reading of the discourse could result in policy taking away just about all that teachers understand as being possible, and putting nothing in its place.<sup>30</sup> Teacher directedness may in any event be appropriate and consonant with community values in some settings.<sup>31</sup>

### *Ways of interpreting the concept of "democratic" classrooms*

We have already noted in the overall findings (Chapter 5) that the area of teacher control is underplayed in policy, although it is of vital concern to teachers and that teachers continue to use corporal punishment, either because there is no alternative, or because its use is encouraged by the school community. In an area such as this, where policy and practice come into sharp conflict, the issue will have to be opened up for debate and problem-solving. The concept of a "democratic" classroom will need to be clarified and teachers will need to be given the time and opportunity to understand this concept and to analyse their own understanding of teacher control and discipline. Teachers also need to be able to see alternatives to corporal punishment which will work in their school context. One suggestion is that the competence (Category 8 in the Observation Schedule) be rephrased so that discipline is given as much emphasis as democracy.

## **6.1.2 Implementation of Appraisal**

Working on the assumption that Appraisal is the single policy all teachers will encounter most directly, it is necessary to comment on implementation of the Appraisal processes.

We suggest that appraisers need to be sensitive to the local context of teaching, recognise the complexity of teaching and adopt an holistic and developmental approach. There would need to be orientation/development programmes for appraisers. We suggest it may be helpful to adopt a whole school approach to appraisal and development, rather than simply focus on the appraisal of individual teachers.

Foucault and others have pointed out that commitment to technology is characteristic of the emergence of industrial and post industrial society. Our research experience in the present project, from its inception to conclusion, implies that a technological approach to appraisal would be unfortunate. While policy provides a useful framework for appraisal and teacher development, the roles cannot be invoked in a simplistic, technical way. An easy "checklist" match between

<sup>30</sup> The comments of a number of teachers indicated that this is exactly what they believed had happened with the cane.

<sup>31</sup> It is notable that in their study of "resilient schools" Christie and Potterton observe that: "in very few of the [resilient] schools were different, more learner-centred or participative teaching methods in evidence" (1997: 15).

roles and competencies derived from policy and individual practice cannot be expected.<sup>32</sup> Our experiences in this project point to the importance of a holistic approach as being the most important operational rule in Appraisal.

In translating the 6 roles into research instruments we found certain roles (most especially those of Lifelong Learner, and Community / Citizen) to be inscrutable, and amenable to capture only through inference and discussion with teachers themselves (see Chapter 1). This approach was vindicated by fieldwork experience. In reflecting on fieldwork, one researcher commented that: "Interview is the key to the process."<sup>33</sup>

Amongst the already-reported findings that support a holistic approach to Appraisal are the following:

- effectiveness cannot be disaggregated into discrete roles
- effective teachers had "something extra" over and above competence in the defined roles, a "presence" embodied in "achieved status" (Bernstein, 1996) which enabled them to exercise interpersonal control
- policy roles better capture the work of schools than of the individual teachers working in them.

In addition, we noted that there can be strong "hit and miss" element related to the vagaries of time frames: at one school, for instance, all observations of one researcher found one particular teacher operating in a whole-group teaching/ lecturing mode. When the additional "triangulating" researcher arrived (see Chapter 1 for discussion on this role), an admirable small group work session was in progress. Group work was clearly not a "one off" occurrence: learners were accustomed to the small group role, and familiar and comfortable with their roles.

For these reasons, in the contexts in which we conducted fieldwork, we do not believe that a valid Appraisal process is possible if simple, low-inference instruments and/ or procedures are followed. Available evidence suggests that such procedures would almost certainly lead to a misleading view of the form of policy without its *substance*. Nor can an outsider - especially a detached, "objective" observer - easily penetrate the complexity of a teacher's work. Understanding requires co-operation of outsiders and insiders.

If our assertions appear to be unduly strong in the light of the limitations of the research project, they are at least supported by other research. For example, the work of the Assessment of

<sup>32</sup> Nor would it be possible: Jackson (1968) reports as many as 1 000 interpersonal exchanges in a day in primary classrooms, or 5 000 in a week. This intensity makes checklists almost impossible to manage.

<sup>33</sup> This point is reinforced by other experiences. Bradley et al (1989) & Powney (1991) cited in Wragg et al (1996) both report that UK teachers found classroom observation least useful, interview most useful.

Performance Unit <sup>34</sup> has been criticised for being "... attempts to reduce a complex and ultimately impenetrable process to measurable outcomes ... inevitably, these attempts present a distorted view of what they claim to measure" (Holt, 1981: 80). Wragg et al's monitoring of Appraisal in the UK leads them to observe that whereas in some jobs the same routine is repeated over and over, making it relatively easy to do and even easier to evaluate, teaching combines knowledge, numerous skills of management and communication, relationships, the manifestation of personal traits, values and attitudes, and intricate patterns of behaviour. Teaching is not a simple matter either to carry out or to appraise (1996: 50).

Important lessons for Appraisal - in line with our argument for an holistic approach - are provided by the literature on evaluation and quality assurance.

### **(i) Evaluation**

Here is a typical evaluation account of a project, in this case of the School's Council Integrated Studies Project set up in the UK in 1968: "It became obvious that a gap yawned between the conception of a project held by its developers and that held by those implementing it in the school" (Kelly, 1989:197). It is precisely because of the context and the way centrally-driven ideas are interpreted, negotiated, and even subverted at local level that models such as "portrayal" (Stake 1972), "illuminative" (Parlett and Hamilton 1975) and "responsive" (Hamilton 1976) evolved. All are premised on the importance of evaluators being familiar with the context and adopting "holistic" approaches to evaluation. A key feature is sensitivity to local context and recognition of the complexity of teaching situations.

Differences in context are precisely what we have highlighted in the present study. Outsiders with no understanding or sensitivity to the context could oversimplify to the extent of doing violence to the intentions behind Appraisal. What is called for is democratic evaluation which "... recognises value pluralism and seeks to represent a range of interests in its issue formulation" (Kelly, 1989: 207).

### **(ii) Quality Assurance**

Most Quality Assurance models emphasise staff "ownership" of both process and product. The Democratic model of accountability described in Chapter 5 and the developmental thrust of the South African appraisal model have strong affinity with principles of Quality Assurance.

A few years ago a popular South African television advertisement depicted a harassed-looking individual searching for his Cremora inside a refrigerator. The triumphant discovery was accompanied by the statement : "It's not inside, it's on top!" With respect to teacher appraisal and development, we suggest that it should be case of: "It's not on top, it's inside!"

<sup>34</sup> The APU's job was national monitoring of standards in Britain.

All in all, it seems reasonable to argue that implementation should aim at placing a holistic model of expected roles - both process and product - inside schools.

A final question about implementation is whether appraisal and development measures are fruitful at the level of individuals, or whether appraisal and development should be conducted within a "whole school" approach. If one accepts the earlier assertion that the roles better describe the work of a school than individuals within it, it would seem to be helpful for implementation to adopt a whole school approach to appraisal and development. A further reason lies in the very considerable difference between schools, and the need for appraisers to understand the context. Policy guidelines issued in the UK in 1991 are instructive:

Appraisal should be set in the context of the objectives of the school which will generally be expressed in a school development plan. Appraisal should support development planning and vice versa. The school objectives in a particular year should be linked with appraisal, so that, for example, professional development targets arising from appraisal may be related to agreed targets and tasks in the development plan. Similarly appraisal targets, when taken together, should provide an important agenda for action for the school as a whole. Targets set during appraisal should therefore meet the needs of the school as well as those of the individual appraisees. Setting the appraisal within the framework of the school development should also ensure that targets are realistic and make the best use of available resources (DES, 1991, cited in Wragg, 1996: 122).

The final point regarding Appraisal implementation is the need for orientation/ development programmes for appraisers (appraisers would include educators, management teams, departmental officials, college or University staff, NGO staff, community members) . One reason for this is our own research experience. Members of our team were involved in the policy analysis, conceptualisation of the research design, preparation for fieldwork, and the fieldwork itself (see Chapter 1). As colleagues in a small academic department, researchers also had the advantage of knowing each other well. Despite this cohesion, reports on fieldwork yielded instances of differing interpretations of a number of categories within roles. The development of common understanding of concepts is no easy task.

A second reason for appraiser orientation/ development lies in the particular responsibility appraisers will shoulder in poorly-resourced rural schools. In these settings, appraisers are likely to be the sole source of the "interaction with panels" provided for in policy. The Appraisal document outlines the process as involving:

- self evaluation
- peer evaluation
- collaboration
- reflective practice
- interaction with panels.

The weight of responsibility on appraisers is clear in contexts where they are likely to be the only "outside" perspective that teachers are likely to experience. Orientation of appraisers would need to position them to implement Appraisal such that it provided a model for the internal processes of self evaluation, reflection and so on.

## 6.2 Developing teachers and schools

The limited size of the present sample, together with the fact that fieldwork was limited to effective teachers in effective schools, means that we are unable to make detailed and specific points regarding implications of this study for teacher development. However, we do feel that the study provides a strong indication of the kind of teacher development necessary to support policy on teachers roles.

**We suggest that teacher development should promote teachers' ability to reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes and values regarding the purpose and practice of educating, as it is these beliefs which inform their practice. Individual development should not take place in a vacuum, but the organisational culture of the school needs to be taken into account also.**

Our earlier analysis implies that the challenge for teacher development is to encourage a trajectory from "restricted" to "extended" professionalism. As we saw earlier, the teachers in our sample were generally much stronger in the practical and foundational competences than in the area of reflexive competence. Strengths were evident in the "Mediator of learning" role, while strength in the role of "Designer of learning programmes" was least evident. The latter role has close affinity with the role of "Lifelong learner", and indeed teachers did not appear to be active or strong in this role other than in the sense of their keeping up to date with policy.<sup>35</sup> It may be useful to design teacher development courses that are aimed specifically at teachers developing their reflexive competences.

At present a good deal of commentary, especially that in the media, is focused on the need for greater teacher commitment, thus emphasising the importance of issues like "time on task", improved subject knowledge, and in general the technicalities and "old fashioned" virtues associated with the "culture of learning and teaching". Our research - perhaps because of the select nature of its sample - suggests that the challenge for teacher development is rather deeper than mere restoration of a culture of teaching and learning, absolutely important though this is. In the context of present policy on teacher roles, a culture of teaching and learning is not enough. The key question now becomes: "*Which (or whose) culture of teaching and learning?*" We say this because our research has demonstrated that teachers with the necessary commitment and skills do not necessarily have the attitudes or values consistent with present policy, and if they do, they may or not work in environments that support or enable their endeavours. Our analysis framed questions of attitude and value within a broad concept of culture.

<sup>35</sup> Lest it appear that there is implied criticism of the teachers here, it should be added that this type of finding would probably be the norm in any other country. Case studies of programmes aimed at developing reflective practice suggest that the treasure goal of reflection is seldom achieved (McIntyre, 1992, cited in Penny, Harley and Jessup, 1996).

Consideration of teacher development within this frame leads us to conclude that development would most profitably be focused on two inter-related levels: the identity of the individual teacher, and the culture of the school. We deal with each of these in turn.

### 6.2.1 Teacher identity

Our analysis leads us to conclude that professional development programmes could not hope to have any impact at the level of attempting to induct teachers into new techniques, for instance to achieve desirable practices such as learner-centred activity, group work, and integrating subject-specific work with the work of other teachers.<sup>36</sup> Serious professional development would have to raise with educators fundamental questions about their own identity construction as educators and as human beings. We concur with the view that:

Teachers teach in the way they do not just because of the skills they have or have not learned. The ways they teach are also grounded in their backgrounds, their biographies, in the kinds of teachers they have become (Hargreaves, 1994: ix).

There is evidence that teachers have strongly held ideologies (in the sense of beliefs) about key aspects of education such as discipline and order, the content and structure of knowledge, teaming and the learner's role, and so on (Meighan, 1997: 191). Policy on teacher roles will, in many instances, challenge the key beliefs that teachers hold about the activity of teaching. Conceptually educators are assumed by policy to be self-directed professionals endowed with practical, foundational and reflexive competences (see Chapter 2). Since the teachers in our sample were "effective" teachers, they were more or less in line with these assumptions (reflexive competences were less evident than practical and foundational). Many other teachers will doubtless not be. We are, after all, products of a system very different to the one in which teacher roles are now prescribed. Deacon and Parker (1983: 132) remind us that approximately eighty percent of South African teachers were trained in the Fundamental Pedagogic paradigm. At one level, then, professional development needs to be focused on the way in which teachers understand the activity of teaching and the assumptions it embodies about knowledge, the learner's role, authority relationships, and so on.

The second important level of teacher identity is that of the social and political values teachers hold and project, probably mostly through the "hidden" curriculum. Much of the area covered by SACE deals with the values of professionalism and citizenship. These are fundamental as they underpin many roles and these infuse practice. In Chapter 2 we observed that: "The SACE code is very optimistic about the practice and conduct of its members being founded on democratic principles and respect for human rights. Specifically, the code requires educators to `... acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the constitution of South Africa" (Chapter 2). Similarly, we noted earlier that the *Norms and Standards* emphasised

<sup>36</sup> This appeared to be the great weakness of OBE "training": introducing people to a new discourse does not in itself change deep-rooted beliefs about the nature of teaching and fundamental aspects of the way in which educators have constructed their identities.

democratic principles, and the need to strive to promote gender equality (Chapter 2). Our policy analysis argued that the Code should be supported by a programme of ethical professional development. identities. Subsequent fieldwork highlights this need, but also provides a somewhat sobering view of the nature of the challenge. Here, for example, is a comment from a fieldworker's notes made after an interview with a teacher:

The roles and competences outlined in the policy documents assume that teachers have intrinsic motivation and a sense of vocation and professionalism. If Mr M's feelings are widespread and teaching is not in fact regarded as a profession with status, but just another job, then these appeals to teachers' values and professional integrity might be in vain.

A major policy weakness in this area is that it "assumes as already existing what it is attempting to produce". This is similar to the problem facing OBE: "The new system ... attempts to produce the kinds of consciousness and identity on which its operationalisation, workability and success actually depend" (Parker & Harley, forthcoming).

The area of teacher identity in relation to prescribed roles is one that represents a major challenge, especially when local research has found that teachers do not have a language of theorising or thinking about their practice (Jessop, 1997).

## **6.2.2 The culture of the school**

Earlier in this chapter it was concluded that because of factors such as the internal division of labour in schools, the roles outlined in policy better described the work taking place within a school than the work of an individual teacher. We also saw evidence that the culture of the school appeared to be a major factor in enabling or constraining individuals with respect to fulfilling roles in the way advocated in policy.

If these observations were correct, the implication is that teacher development cannot be separated from school development. When thinking about school development and change, there is usually a focus on changing the visible structures within schools, which tends to ignore the beliefs, attitudes, norms and values of teachers within the school. Parker writes that South African education policy, such as OBE, will work only if there is both structural and cultural transformation. "There has to be a change in the values, attitudes and dispositions of teachers, learners and civil servants. Cultural transformation is a key element in implementing policy" (1997: 12).

Parker's view is consistent with the international literature on change and development. Hargreaves, for example, argues that: "The impact of much externally imposed change is structural rather than cultural, since it is easier to legislate about people's work situation and practices than their values and beliefs" (Hargreaves: 1995: 30, 31). In similar vein, Fullan observes that changing formal structures is not the same as changing norms, habits, skills and beliefs. As he aptly puts it: "... to restructure is not to reculture" (1993: 49).

Hargreaves (1994: 255) reiterates this idea by saying that there are two ways of looking at change - from a structural or a cultural perspective. Structural changes underestimate the traditions, assumptions and working relationships that profoundly shape existing practice. The belief is that the important thing is to change the structures and then practice will conform to them. By contrast, the cultural view sees existing practice as heavily determined by deep-rooted beliefs, practices and working relationships among teachers and students which make up the culture of the school. There is a danger that the policies we are examining in this study do not sufficiently recognise this cultural view of change.

There can be no doubting the enormity of this challenge in South Africa, and our research is of too humble a scale to propose specific ways of meeting the challenge. However, it does imply that teacher development would need to be conceptualised and carried out within a "whole school" paradigm if teachers are to fulfil the roles prescribed by policy. And we hope it has conveyed a realistic sense of the difficulties. Certainly, without adequate development/orientation programmes, the good intentions and progressive nature of policy could collapse into a narrow and ritualistic instrumentalism.

### **6.3 Further research**

This study has raised many questions. A by no means exhaustive list of possible issues to research further follows:

- The research reported in this study involved effective teachers in effective schools. How would these findings compare in schools not so classified, and with a random sample of teachers?
- Case studies of the culture of successful schools would be interesting. How does such a culture develop, and how is it sustained?
- Historical constructions (ideologies) of learning, knowledge, and appropriate teacher/learner relationships are probably largely unconscious beliefs we hold. What are teachers' views on these issues? Has policy on teachers' roles induced identity conflicts?
- Officially, Curriculum 2005 claims to be learner-centred, but the policy documents on teachers' role is silent on the possible role of learners in the policies. Research has shown that learners have clearly-defined expectations of their teachers. What do learners expect of their teachers?
- Parents are likely to experience discontinuity between new policy construction of teacher roles and the role of the teacher as they experienced it themselves. How do communities view the new construction of education? What sorts of constraints or opportunities arise from community perspectives? <sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Although elevation of the role of community undoubtedly has a progressive, democratic intention, in some case it appears to have served wealthier communities with conservative ends rather better than poor communities of the kind in our study, where parents reportedly saw no role for themselves in the school. Christie and Potterton (1997) caution against over-emphasis on the role of community in school reform, noting that establishment of these bodies might prove more energy-consuming than sustaining.

- It would be an opportune to mount a longitudinal study tracing the impact of new policy curriculum policy on teacher roles.
- The present research was focused on high schools : what of primary schools?
- What are the possibilities of using the present research instrument for identifying shortcomings in schools and turning these into developmental processes?
- How deeply entrenched are value discontinuities regarding, eg democratic teaching approaches, corporal punishment, and gender roles? How serious are value discontinuities?
- The abolition of corporal punishment was a major issue (complaint?) but our study showed that it is still alive and well. Case studies on ways of maintaining "discipline" would be useful, especially if there are some democratic practices that work. (Christie and Potterton, 1997 refer to the idiosyncratic ways that resilient schools discipline learners.)
- Case studies of school/ community relationships would be useful. How do communities define their role in relation to the school?
- The normative expectations of a school appeared to be a major factor in determining the way in which teacher effectiveness was defined. What is the relationship between school expectations and performance?
- Principals in this study were seen in the study to be playing key roles. What are their practices in relation to policy?
- The role of the teacher in relation to language may be somewhat underplayed and deserving of attention at policy level - we were struck by the sparks of understanding and enthusiasm when supporting explanations were given in Zulu. [It is notable and interesting that language difficulties amongst learners were mentioned by first language speakers teaching second language learners, not by second language teachers teaching second language speakers (the context in which lack of understanding must surely be most acute?)].

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