

# Chapter One

## An introduction to the study

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### 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to describe and analyse the factors affecting the policy implementation process of a potentially system-changing teacher appraisal system in South African schools. This chapter will discuss the research plan, including the focus of the study; the rationale for embarking on this inquiry; the policy contexts; the conceptual framework guiding the research; the methodology and methods deployed in the course of the investigation; and the significance and contribution of this research to the knowledge base on policy implementation.

### 1.2 The focus of the study

The focus of this research is a detailed case study of a policy reform where the staff development team of the school is the agent of implementation. It provides both a macro- and micro-analysis of the complex issues involved in a policy process that requires far-reaching changes at different levels of the education system.

This study will describe a historically-disadvantaged secondary school (Cape Flats Secondary School, a pseudo name) in Cape Town, located within the Western Cape province of South Africa. In spite of extremely adverse institutional conditions, this school volunteered to implement a new policy called the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS). It will describe the implementation challenges that the staff and the Staff Development Team (SDT) faced against the backdrop of the DAS policy expectations. Since the school was unable to implement the DAS policy, I will record in particular the experiences of six staff members relating to the school-based factors, organisational development and change management challenges which led to this result. Furthermore, I will reflect on my involvement and experiences in formulating both the DAS policy and its support process, and cross-reference them with the experiences and observations of the school staff and the literature relevant

to this study. This data is then captured and interpreted within an Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework.

### **1.3 The rationale and policy context of the study**

In 1998 the new South African government decided to elevate the professional status and functioning of its teachers. Among other things, this decision took the form of a national reform policy initiative focused on school-based, teacher-controlled appraisal and professional development. Nonetheless, this Development Appraisal System (DAS) policy, which claimed to benefit the professional development of teachers, struggled between 1999 and 2001 to make its impact on practice.

This result raised the puzzling question: *Why was this highly promising policy, intended to improve the professional practice of teachers, not implemented at all in a school that welcomed its adoption?* By using a case study of one secondary school, this study intends to throw light onto this puzzle. In gathering data responsive to this question, I need to declare that I am uniquely positioned in this study since I was one of those who designed the DAS policy. This position allows me to focus on the data received from the school staff as well as on data and experiences from the DAS policy's formulation and support processes.

The formulation of the DAS policy had its origin in the strained relationship between the government and teachers in South Africa, owing to the inspection policy in place at the time. Until 1994, this relationship was based on a foundation of mistrust and punishment, instead of on teaching and learning (Jansen 2000). The existing policy, that led South African teachers to reject its mostly punitive character, was "largely inspectorial and bureaucratic" (Chetty et. al., 1993, p.2). This inspection policy shared, with all other aspects of the education system during the apartheid era, a top-down, closed, bureaucratic, hierarchical and authoritarian character. In the case of black teachers in particular, the policy was concerned with bureaucratic efficiency and social control rather than professional development and empowerment (Chetty et. al., 1993; NEPI Governance, 1992).

At the school level, supervision was oriented towards: (1) improving examination results as a narrow objective, rather than improving educational processes generally; (2) assessing teachers with a view to monetary rewards; and (3) overwhelmingly enforcing compliance with departmental regulations rather than engaging teachers about their work (Fehnel, 1993). Loyalty to officials and their departments outweighed the interests and needs of teachers.

A study undertaken by The World Bank (Fehnel, 1993, p.31) indicates that there was no discrepancy between the opinions of teachers and supervisory officials about the role of inspectors in the South African education system in that era. The research team identify three sources of tension in the make-up of the bureaucracy, namely (1) the role of inspectors and supervisors; (2) their legitimacy, and; (3) the number of schools, principals and teachers they were required to service. They further indicate that whatever policy choices might be made in the transformation of the system would ultimately have to address the existing structure, personnel and practice of the inspectorate since the latter had a profoundly negative impact on the quality, capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the system, as well as on the interactions and relationships between inspectors and school level personnel.

In analysing the arguments and research undertaken during the late 1980s and early 1990s within South Africa and internationally, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) saw a new appraisal system as the 'solution' - or at least a better approach - to teacher accountability and development. The DAS system was, therefore, designed by using 'best practice' advice as articulated in the international appraisal literature of that period. The features of a 'sound and constructive' developmental appraisal policy, taken from a variety of different sources and contexts, were integrated into the design of the DAS policy.

During the early and mid-nineties, I observed a paradigm shift in the way policy-makers viewed education. What was primarily a transmission mode of teaching shifted to a more constructivist mode of teaching. In particular, this shift strongly influenced the formulation of the DAS policy. A significant contributing factor promoting this change in thinking lay in the expectations regarding the desirable characteristics of future citizens. In addition, teachers at the time were challenged to explore innovative teaching strategies in order to meet the different learning

requirements of different learners (Rolheiser and Hundey, 1995; Anderson, Rolheiser and Gordon, 1998).

The mode of teaching and strategies used by teachers reflect their beliefs about learning. First, if their belief system encompasses the view that learners construct their own knowledge (constructivism), then the role of the teacher will likely be that of guide, facilitator and resource, as distinct from him/her being the foundation of the knowledge itself (Fogarty, 1999, p.76). Second, if the teacher holds the view that learning is facilitated by transmitting information, then control of the learning experience (positivism) will tend to reside with the teacher. This transmission view of learning is more of a teacher-input model, with learners receiving information from the teacher and then being expected to make sense of the information on their own, as if learning were a linear process. Embedded in this second view of learning, is a view that interaction should occur primarily between the teacher and learner, while interaction between learners must be discouraged. The latter was the prevailing model of teaching in South Africa at the time DAS was developed.

#### **1.4 My role within the policy formulation stage**

When I entered the policy-making process in 1997, I held a constructivist view of education and learning. My stance was based more on my experience as a teacher, rather than as a teacher representative with a policymaking function. This stance influenced the role I played in the following ways:

- (1) I brought to the policy-making process a strongly normative perspective on education and the role of teachers – what education and schools could ideally become.
- (2) I looked at educational problems through the eyes of teachers. This approach is in contradiction to what Murray (2002, p.73) describes as the policy-makers' problem in South Africa – that they “look at educational problems through the eyes of researchers as opposed to teachers”. In fact, his view might be the opposite of what was happening in the policy-making process of the time. I observed that most departmental officials in the policy-process had strong teacher backgrounds rather than research backgrounds.

- (3) Like most of the other teacher representatives in the policy-process, I was eager to get away from the prevalent 'control' approach in education (what they had always been doing), whereas departmental officials were quite comfortable with this approach (not changing things radically).
- (4) I did not appreciate the immense commitment, support system and development challenge that had to be marshalled to assist teachers in moving from 'what was' to 'what could be' in relation to DAS.
- (5) I was not aware that the creation of this support and development system was the responsibility of departmental officials who, at the time, were comfortable with their current operations – an inherent contradiction between the intention of the DAS policy and the intentions of those that had to support its implementation (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

This strong constructivist orientation, with its roots in progressive education, is prevalent in most of the education reform policies developed in South Africa since 1994; and it implies non-traditional thinking about learning, the purpose of teaching, the role and responsibilities of teachers, and the role and responsibilities of officials in rendering support.

## **1.5 The design features of the DAS policy**

The purpose of appraisal, under the overall umbrella of serving the educational interests of learners and the community, falls into two main categories: teacher development and teacher quality. While there are some inherent dilemmas and even apparent contradictions between these two purposes, I view them as interdependent and complementary. Effective appraisal, even when it is concerned with specific purposes such as competitive selection for teaching jobs and promotion, addresses elements of both teacher development and teacher quality. With this view in mind, the key question that drove the development of DAS was: What features should be included in a sound developmental appraisal system that are found in research indicating what does and does not work well in improving professional practice?

We found ten such features and incorporated them into the DAS policy:

- (1) Involvement of all stakeholders in the policy formulation stage: This is consistent with the research of Evans and Tomlinson, 1989; Hickcox and Musella, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 1989; Gitlin and Smyth, 1989; and Chetty et. al., 1993, regarding what is needed to make an appraisal system workable and impactful. This inclusionary approach to involvement was confirmed when all of South Africa's teacher unions and the Department of Education (DoE) signed the DAS policy agreement in November 1998. The teacher unions strongly supported the participatory aspects of the DAS policy.
- (2) Healthy systemic changes included in the policy: This "democratic, developmental and teacher-centred" design (Chetty et. al., 1993, p.14) replaced the unacceptable historical design of the old Inspection system which contained an approach characterised by "political bias, unchecked inspector power, victimisation of teachers, irrelevant evaluation criteria and secrecy of scores" (Chetty et. al., 1993, p.3).
- (3) A simple intention and focus: The policy was designed to facilitate the professional development of teachers and improve teacher quality. No punitive provisions were included in the policy (Jansen, 2000), although, at the insistence of the DoE, such provisions were included in the first seven of its nine drafts. This 'mechanism of dispute procedure' was preferred by the DoE representatives, but the teacher union representatives wanted the policy to clearly fall within the 'professional paradigm' domain, and not the 'negotiation paradigm' domain. This dispute procedure could easily have jeopardised the development of the necessary trust and openness provisions that made DAS genuinely "professional" in character (Piggot-Irvine, 2001). Consequently, the developmental purpose of the DAS policy was clearly stated in the policy itself (Chisholm, 2001).
- (4) Implementation and management responsibilities assigned to the school SDT: The policy formulators assigned the implementation and management responsibility of this policy to the Staff Development Team (SDT) of the school, but it still kept the individual teacher in control of the process. Teachers were to nominate individuals to serve on their appraisal panels and also to propose the preferred processes and feedback from panellists.

- (5) Teacher control over professional development: Consistent with the work of Chisholm and Vally, 1996; Evans and Tomlinson, 1989; Pollitt, 1988; Stake, 1989; Hickcox and Musella, 1989; and Gitlin and Smyth, 1989; teacher control of appraisal for personal and professional development purposes is always seen as a critical factor for its success. Consequently, the only mandatory aspect of the policy was that all teachers had to engage in the appraisal process;
- (6) A clear strategy for teacher support with quality time: DAS required that schools and the SDT have a clear strategy regarding how to respond to requests for help by teachers following the appraisal (Ingvarson, 1989). Furthermore, enough time had to be allocated to make provision for support priorities as requested by the individual teacher.
- (7) Professional culture of self-assessment among teachers: DAS promoted a professional culture in which teachers would take responsibility for assessing their own practice and focus on issues and concerns relevant to them (Darling-Hammond, 1989; Ramsden, 1992; and Guskey, 1994).
- (8) Gathering of appropriate and multiple data: The policy actively encouraged teachers to gather “appropriate” data about their practice and to do so by developing their own professional development plan. Data were to be gathered from multiple sources (Scriven, 1991; and Darling Hammond, 1989). This would lead to appraisal discussions being based on factual, objective information, which would ensure that the process was valid, fair, rigorous and reliable (Cardno and Piggot-Irvine, 1997).
- (9) Developing a trustworthy community of colleagues: DAS specified that the appraisee was to appoint a majority of her/his panellists, in order to prevent secrecy and to overcome the mystery and arbitrariness of inspection. This would facilitate a knowledgeable, professional conversation between colleagues who understand and recognise the complexities of their work (Joyce and Showers, 1995). To encourage reflection, teachers were required to discuss their feedback data with a panel of trusted colleagues (Powney, 1991; Hickcox and Musella, 1992). This was also seen to enhance interpersonal effectiveness, open, trust-based relationships, and productive reasoning among colleagues (Argyris, 1990).

This 'educative relationship' would be based on bilateralism through shared control, thinking, evidence, planning and monitoring (Piggot-Irvine, 2001).

(10) New and stable instruments for teacher accountability and development: The new criteria and frameworks of the DAS policy resulted in the subsequent development and signing of resolutions pertaining to the 'Job descriptions of different teachers', '80-hour Professional development' commitments, and 'Workloads for different teachers.' These guiding frameworks had never been part of teacher evaluation, development and accountability in South Africa, and they helped create some agreed standards of teacher practice.

With these ten features included in its provisions, the resulting DAS policy contained many deep, complex, and unfamiliar elements.

## **1.6 The conceptual framework**

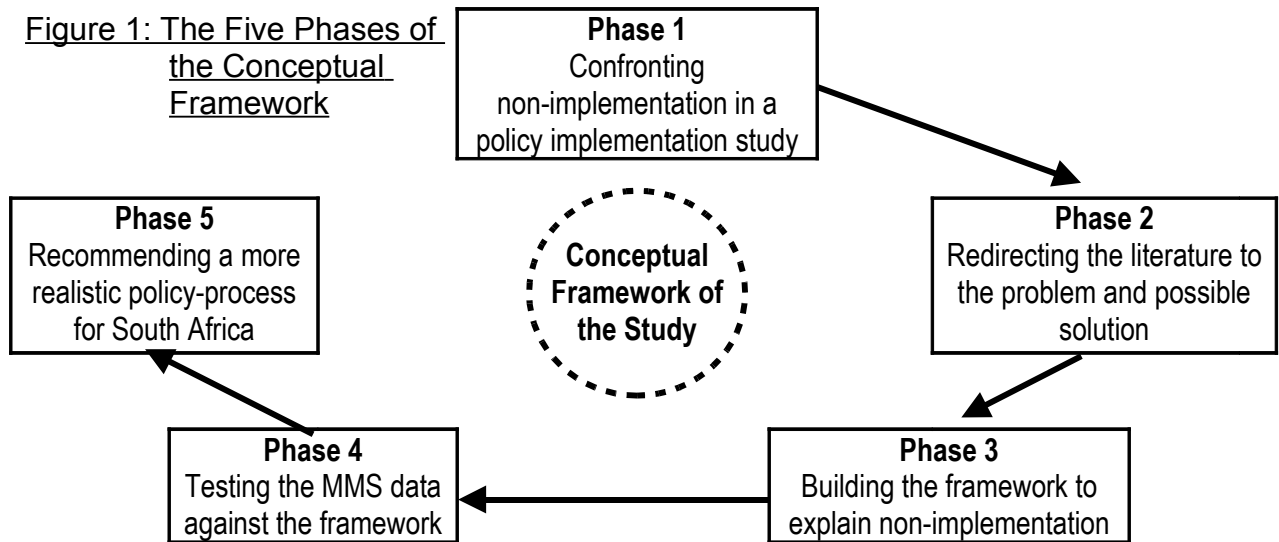
My research started out as a policy implementation study, intending to analyse the processes and experiences of Cape Flats Secondary School's (CFSS) SDT members in implementing the DAS policy. In 2003, eighteen months after I facilitated a five-day information workshop for the staff of CFSS, I came to the conclusion that the DAS policy was not going to be implemented in the foreseeable future in the school. I was therefore compelled to reconsider my initial focus and to redirect the study instead toward the 'non-implementation of policy'. Given this unexpected change of direction, the study became an investigative journey that took me into several unplanned phases, loops, spins, reflections and re-conceptualisations. What follows is a brief summary of that evolutionary process.

The design, conceptual framework, findings, and recommendations of the current study emerged from engaging in five ever-evolving phases of work, portrayed below in Figure 1. They involved: (1) Confronting 'non-implementation' in what was to be a policy implementation study; (2) Redirecting my already extensive literature review toward what is known as the Policy-Practice Gap (PPG) so that I could make sense of my new research problem and connect it with other closely related literature; (3) Building concepts and a research framework to explain non-implementation; (4) Testing the CFSS data against the research framework; and (5) Recommending a



more realistic policy-process for South Africa. Apart from Phase 1 which will be discussed here in detail, all other phases will only be briefly described in this section. Phase 2 will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, and Phase 3 in Chapter 3. Phase 4 will be discussed in detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, and Chapter 8 will present the study's recommendations – Phase 5.

Figure 1: The Five Phases of the Conceptual Framework



The first phase involved confronting non-implementation in a policy implementation study. As indicated, this study began as an inquiry into the factors affecting the on-site implementation of South Africa's new potentially system-changing teacher appraisal system called DAS. The DAS policy aimed to elevate the professional status and function of teachers by emphasising school-based, teacher-controlled appraisal and professional development. Although the policy claimed to benefit the professional development of teachers, it failed to make its impact on practice between 2002 and 2003 at CFSS. Hence, I was compelled to reconsider the entire design of my study and transform it from a policy-implementation to a non-implementation study.

The difficulty in implementing the DAS policy did not come as a shock to me, since previous policies, including the country's curriculum policy (which I also helped formulate), also struggled to be implemented in schools. I decided to embark on an investigation of why, under what appeared to be quite favourable conditions, CFSS failed to implement the DAS policy. In order to make a significant contribution to the study of policy non-implementation in South Africa, I tried to avoid making the same

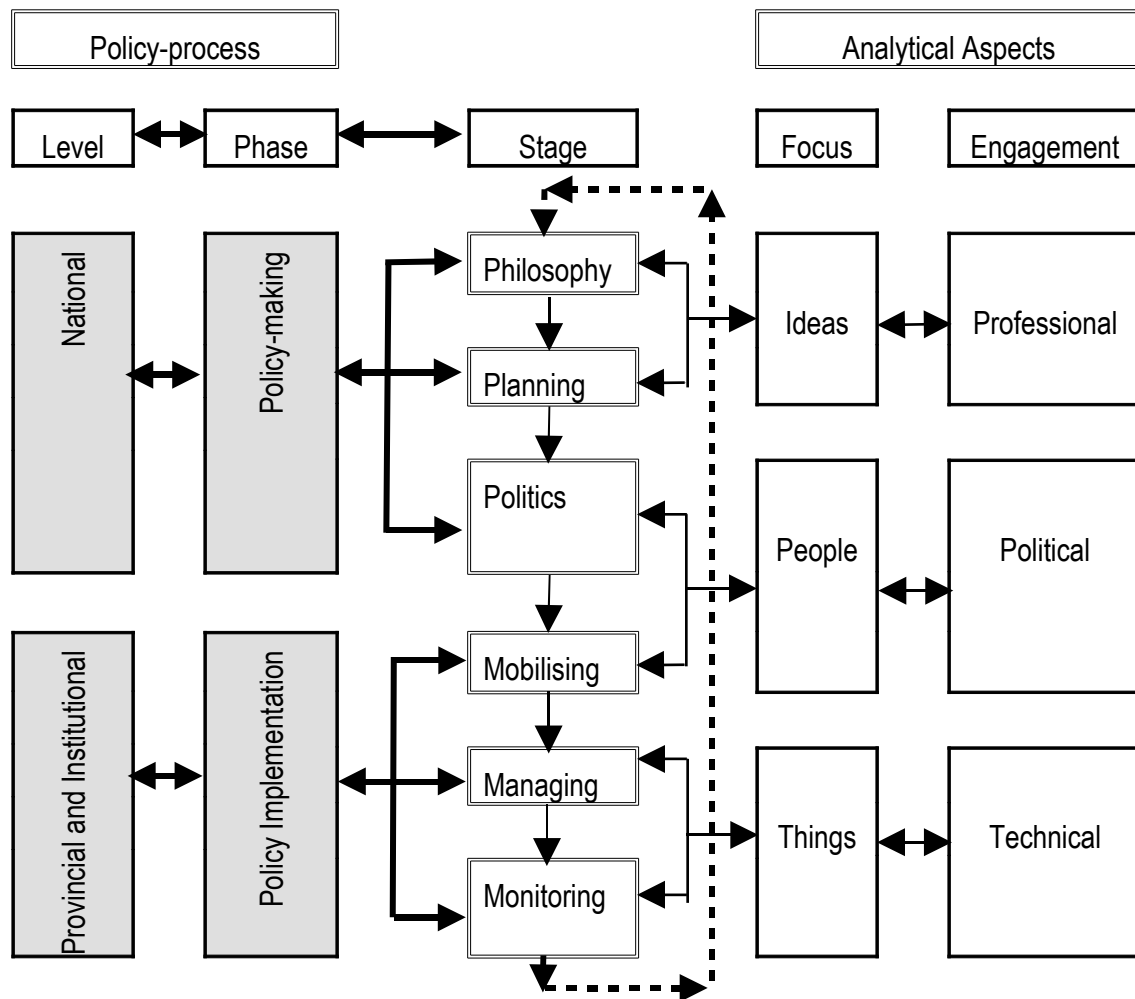
mistakes as those who undertook similar studies. In particular, my study was primarily guided by the strong recommendations of Motala (2001), namely:

- (1) Not to focus only on the “symptomatic complaints about education issues”, but rather address their systemic and “structural” causes (p.240);
- (2) Not to focus only on “the weaknesses, failures or breakdown in service delivery” in South Africa, but rather to identify what could be done to remedy them, both qualitatively and quantitatively (p.240);
- (3) Not to have a narrow “inquiry” perspective, but rather to maintain a deep, “solution” perspective with clearly defined goals (p.241), and;
- (4) Not to be “anti- or a-sociological”, but rather to use the ‘voices’ of teachers in particular to guide policy-makers to solutions which are contextualised in schools at the operational implementation level (p.242-3).

Motala’s (2001) opinions clearly demand a very thorough scrutiny and understanding of the entire policy-process, instead of just the implementation process alone. His comments are about the bigger picture, the ‘helicopter view’ of policy-making, and not just the micro interpretation of the individual stages in isolation from each other. Furthermore, my study required a deeper understanding of the known processes of policy-making, and the roleplayers and interest groups within these processes. In particular, the investigation had to adopt positions which are clear and specific instead of offering a critique filled with ‘vague generalisations’ and lacking in specific “targets” – that is, roleplayers, interest groups, and structural or systemic features of education itself.

The model that best clarified the educational policy-making process for me was developed by Hodgkinson (1983, p.26). It was insightful and robust because it specifically took roles, interest groups, and structural and systemic problems directly into account. However, in order to make it directly useful to my study, I needed to reorganise it into the form shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A re-organised version of Hodgkinson's policy-making process model



Apart from more adequately describing the overall nature of the policy-process, this model seeks to remedy three neglected aspects of current policy-making in education, namely:

- (1) The failure to distinguish between the logically **different** activities of what Hodgkinson (1983) calls Professional, Political and Technical **Engagement**;
- (2) The failure to acknowledge the intrinsically **philosophical, vision and capacity building** nature of policy-making, and;
- (3) The failure to identify general implications of a policy-making process informed by **differential expertise** within such a process.

In his model Hodgkinson (1983) argues that any policy-process that seeks to find solutions to problems or attempts to develop new policy would first demand an understanding of the organisational values that are articulated by roleplayer

principals through philosophical dialogue within the philosophical stage (arguments, dialectic, logic, rhetoric and value clarification). This professional engagement focuses on the understanding and articulating of Ideas. Second, the ideas emerging from the first stage are translated into some sort of plan and reduced to a written, persisting and communicable policy draft. This stage needs to involve the best possible minds relating to that particular problem or new idea(s), in order to produce a variety of possibilities or proposals to choose from. Third, the draft policy then enters into a political stage of persuasion and choice. This is the domain of power, resource control, and politics that takes the policy-making process from a 'focus on Ideas' to a 'focus on People'. During this stage, coalitions are formed, levers pulled, and persons persuaded as power and support are marshalled around a draft policy. All three stages (philosophy, planning and politics) make up the policy-making phase.

After the power is aligned and resources are committed in the third stage, the fourth stage requires the mobilisation and organising of all resources around the organisation's purposes. This stage is critical and involves a shift from administrating to managing the policy-process. It is during this stage where pieces are put together and philosophy is moved from the realm of 'ideas through political behaviour of people' into the realm of 'facts, action and things'. Implicit in this stage of mobilisation, is the motivation of human resources in line with the organisation's purposes. It is, above all, on the successful negotiation of this fourth stage that realisation or actualisation of any organisational goal depends.

The committed and mobilised resources still need day-to-day, short-term and long-term managing, which is the fifth stage. It is during this stage that routinisation, programming and the management of intervention support strategies occur.

The sixth stage involves monitoring, where activities such as the formal supervision and evaluation occur. A feedback loop is shown in Figure 2 (dotted line), to relate this final stage to the first stage, making it a continuing circuit. Operations research and systems analysis activate this loop, when the match or fit between the 'reality of things' and the original and continuing 'focus on ideas' is compared and tested. These last three stages (mobilising, managing and monitoring) are part of the policy implementation phase.

In summary, what emerges from Hodgkinson's model, are two important organising tools namely: (1) the clarification of different policy-process stages, and (2) the analytical aspects within the policy-process, which he calls the 'three neglected aspects'. I therefore took these organising tools to the next phase where I examine in the 'policy-practice gap' literature which makes comments and gives reasons why policy implementation is failing.

## **1.7 The literature on policy implementation and the related research questions**

The second phase of my research involved analysing the 'policy-practice gap' (PPG) literature in order to understand the reasons that other researchers have given for the non-implementation of policy in education. There are dozens of PPG studies, but most of them deal with these issues without specifying the precise origins or causes of implementation failures in any systematic way. For example, unlike Hodgkinson's well-developed model with its distinctive stages, areas of focus, and arenas of engagement, most of the PPG issues are addressed in a much looser fashion, which made it difficult to understand and frame the key sources of non-implementation it was describing. I attempted to overcome this dilemma by thoroughly analysing each study to identify the specific issues it raised and then grouping those issues into broad categories. Once I had finished examining and analysing this highly diverse literature, I was satisfied that its significant messages could be captured in nine distinct themes.

After deeper reflection, and with only slight adjustments, I was able to categorise the nine themes according to the two major organising concepts in the Hodgkinson model, namely: (1) the stages of the Policy-process (noted on the left side of Figure 2), and (2) the Analytical Aspects (shown on the right side of Figure 2).

My analysis suggested that three of the nine themes related directly to what I decided to call the 'Policy Formulation' stage of the total Policy-process. This includes Hodgkinson's Philosophy and Planning stages and their inherent focus on what he calls Ideas. Another three of the nine themes in the PPG literature fell into what I saw as a second stage in the overall Policy-process, which I named 'Intervention Support.' This second stage includes Hodgkinson's Politics and

Mobilisation stages (with their focus on People) and represents what is actually meant in the literature by the 'gap' between policy formulation and its implementation in schools. My third stage of the total Policy-process I call 'Operational Implementation'. It contains the remaining three themes from the PPG literature and includes Hodgkinson's Managing and Monitoring stages, and their focus on what he calls Things.

I was initially surprised, that the nine themes from the literature distributed themselves evenly across my three Policy-process stages, so I scrutinised each set of three for similarities across the sets. Eventually I discovered the pattern that existed within and across the sets. One of the themes in each stage related directly to what I saw as its 'Intended Systemic Impact' – that is, what the basic nature of that respective stage was all about. Another of the themes in each stage related to its key 'Process Requirements and (their) Implications.' And the third theme in each case related quite directly to what I saw as its 'Essential Roleplayer Qualities and Interests.'

Hence, after an intense amount of analysis and integration of issues in the PPG literature, I was not only able to identify the nine key themes in that scattered body of work, I was able also to generate a unique 'three-by-three' matrix for organising these themes that directly reflected the two major domains of factors in the Hodgkinson model. From this point forward I will refer to this matrix as 'The Framework of Key Policy-Practice Gap Issues.' The columns of this matrix contain my three Policy-process stages, and the rows reflect three aspects of what Hodgkinson would consider Engagement Factors. The matrix is displayed and described in detail in Chapter 2.

This third stage (Intended Systemic Impact, Process Requirements and Implications and Essential Roleplayer Qualities and Interests). I was then able to develop a framework by representing the three policy-process stages on the horizontal axis, and the three analytical aspects on the vertical axis. I call this three-by-three model. The six stages of Hodgkinson are combined into three stages within my model. The combination of the philosophy and planning stages is represented by the Policy Formulation stage in the model. As displayed within Figure 2, the 'jump' or 'gap' between the policy-making and implementation phase, represented by the politics

and mobilising stages, is exactly what the PPG literature identifies as one of the problems. The combination of these two stages is represented by the Intervention Support stage, and the combination of the managing and monitoring stages is represented by the Operational Implementation stage within the model. Apart from these adjustments, the two organising tools of Hodgkinson are the same, but they are organised within the mentioned ‘three-by-three’ model, which is unique to this study.

Since it was impossible for this study to address in detail all nine themes of the extensive PPG literature, I had to make an informed choice as to what literature I would examine more critically in the study. I wanted to ensure that at least one component of each of the policy-process stages as well as the analytic components was taken forward in the study. This choice was made based on a process of elimination. I looked at each of the three components within the policy-process stages and eliminated those which I knew, as well as based on the features of DAS, were not contributing factors to the non-implementation of the policy. In the end, I identified three components which represented the highest “causal probability factors” to have been missing in the DAS policy-process. The three themes I chose to investigate deeply in this study represent about 62% of the total issues within the vast PPG literature I reviewed. The key question about the literature here is: *How is the gap between policy and practice to be explained, especially from a policy-maker and teacher point of view?* This question was posed by Sayed and Jansen (2001, p.1) within the South African policy arena: “How is this gap between policy and practice to be explained?”

The three themes (dimensions) chosen from the ‘three-by-three’ model are captured within the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) Framework, which strengthened the study in two respects. First, this framework allows me to separate different comments and/or critiques on the policy-process stages, the policy-analytical aspects and the links between the engagements and stages in order to overcome the generalisation within the PPG debate, as currently presented in policy literature in order for the model to be useful to understand the non-implementation of the DAS policy. Second, it further highlights the current ‘disconnected’ approach of the policy-process, which is a policymaker-led approach to ‘what is wrong’ and ‘how

it should be fixed' at school level. The framework highlights the lack of an integrated, 'knowledge-based', 'data-driven decision making' approach within the current policy-process. This Integrated Approach to policy-making will be discussed in Phase 5 of this section.

The third phase involved the building of concepts and frameworks to explain non-implementation. Given the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework, which represents three dimensions, the following literature investigation had to be addressed: *'What has been discussed within the literature about these three dimensions?'* Since these dimensions emerged from the 'policy-practice gap' literature, a thorough analysis of other education literature started. This section will highlight the mentioned literature, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

The first dimension deals with the research question: *What was the expected level, scope and depth of change necessary by school to implement the policy, as envisaged by policy formulators and thus displayed in the policy documents and processes?* The second dimension deals with the research question: *Which elements of the policy, and conditions at the school, needed to be supported by implementation support agents (national, provincial and district officials) to facilitate successful implementation?* And the third dimension deals with the research question: *What was the level of functionality of the school for facilitating the successful implementation of the reform policy?* These questions reflect a 'seeking for answers' from three different perspectives (policy-makers, support agents and teachers), but they should be looked at from the sensitivity of all three interest groups, meaning that when policy-makers seek answers to their questions, they must look at the interest of others too.

The first dimension of the IRC framework focuses on the complexity, depth and intensity of the reform policy. The purpose of this study is to indicate conceptually the different types of reform policies that might exist and how they vary in their challenge to schools, and not technically define these types. For the purpose of clarifying this argument, I will make use of five types of reform policies which are currently used in different situations in education. I will call the five types of reform policies in this study, (1) Single Component reform, (2) Comprehensive reform, (3) Organisational Development reform, (4) Redesign reform, and (5) Rethinking reform.



My assumption is that these reform policies increase in complexity, depth and intensity as I move from a Type 1 to a Type 5 reform policy. I am also arguing that the greater the policy demand for change, the bigger the demand it places on Intervention Support agents to support and empower the school, and the greater the school functionality is required.

The second dimension of the IRC framework focuses on the conditions that are necessary to facilitate successful reform implementation at site level. Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers (2004, p.225) explain the “seven capacities of the U movement” necessary to overcome complex change. Fullan (2001, p.3) calls them the “five components” needed by leaders to reinforce “positive change”. Joyner (2000, p.872) defines them as “contextual elements that need to be considered when implementing reform policies at a systemic level”. McLaughlin (1998, p.72) identifies them as the local “paramount variables that affect the outcomes of the implementation process”, and Schwahn & Spady (1998, p.22-23) define them as the “operational conditions necessary in ensuring that policy implementation has a possibility to succeed”. All five arguments use different labels for these conditions, but essentially argue the same thing – that explicit, tangible Intervention Support is needed in order to give reform policies the opportunity to be successfully implemented at school level. Although these researchers have identified different labels, most of them identified similar elements. Since the Schwahn and Spady (1998) framework emerged from nearly a hundred sources to derive their five labels and has a strong systemic focus, this study will use their framework, namely (i) Purpose, (ii) Vision, (iii) Ownership, (iv) Capacity, and (v) Support.

Without these elements, I will argue, the policy does not have a chance of being successful. Policy-makers therefore may be alienating those schools who are in need of these elements, rather than assisting them to establish these elements within their schools. Although Schwahn and Spady (1998), Joyner (2000) and McLaughlin (1998) discuss these elements in relation to change in general, and Senge et. al. (2004) and Fullan (2001) focus on individual and leadership capacity to deal with change. I conclude by arguing that the amount of support for these five elements will vary depending on the complexity of the policy and the level of

functionality (to be discussed in the next theme) of the school where the policy is implemented.

The third dimension of the IRC framework focuses on the context of schooling and the vast disparities existing among schools in general and in South African schools in particular as indicated by Sayed (2001). The origin of this concern stems from the question: *Why did the DAS policy not work (was not implemented) within a school which was projecting all the positive and supportive commitment and will to implement it?*

This section will focus on three levels of school functionality namely (1) high functioning, (2) low-functioning, and (3) non-functioning schools. Again, these concepts are used in this study to illustrate conceptually the different levels of individual and collective capacity that exist within a school. For example, the perception or image which was projected by the CFSS staff I initially consulted did not compare accurately with the 'real' conditions or reality at the school. In essence, those staff members projected their school as high functioning and ready for implementation, subject to an information workshop session on the DAS policy. The information workshop session was identified as the 'missing link' that prevented them from implementing DAS. Eighteen months after facilitating the workshop, I came to the conclusion that the DAS policy was not going to be implemented in the school in the foreseeable future. When the research was conducted, however, the condition of the school as viewed by the majority of interviewees was more towards the low to non-functioning levels, indicating a school that is missing far more than just an information workshop session. I, therefore, argue that knowing the level of functionality of the school could assist policy-makers, intervention support agents and those responsible for facilitating policy implementation at school level, in understanding and responding to the readiness of schools to implement a given policy as well as the amount of support and resources needed by those schools.

The concept of a 'high, low and non-functioning school', is not based on the level of academic performance of learners, or the quantity of resources (especially material) available at school, but on the quality of organisational capacity available to perform effective change management functions. After scanning the literature on the PPG, 'School Effectiveness Research' (SER) and the 'School Improvement Research'

(SIR), and eliminating the 'learner performance' items, the literature debate focuses on ten areas. These ten areas are identified as necessary capacity and skills (functionality levels) that must be present for school to respond to reform policy challenges, which are (1) school ethos, (2) vision, aims and strategic planning, (3) role of the principal, (4) role of the principal and the senior management team, (5) structures, roles and responsibilities, (6) decision-making and communication, (7) professional working relationships, (8) links with parents and the community, (9) school governing body (SGB) and Department of Education (DoE), and (10) managing change. Within the school functionality debate in this study, no distinction is made between the types of school (public or independent) or the different stages of schools (primary – reception year, foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase; secondary – senior phase and further education and training phase).

## **1.8 The methodology of this study**

Early in 2001, the staff of CFSS requested me to assist them in the implementation of the DAS policy. I indicated my willingness to respond positively to their request, subject to them (the school) allowing me to research the strategies, challenges and successes at play during their implementation process. After an informal agreement was struck between us, a formal agreement to cooperate in the study was received from staff members in general, and the district office which serves the school. My first task was to facilitate five workshop sessions, focused on assisting teachers and the SMT to implement DAS.

A consultative group was formed to liaise with me and scrutinise the process and impact of my study on individual teachers and the school as a whole. The consultative group met, (1) at the beginning of the research process in 2001, (2) during mid-2003 when scepticism developed about whether the school would ever manage to implement the policy, and (3) during late 2003 when they were briefed on the research insights of the study.

During August and September 2003, teachers participated voluntarily in interviews and completed questionnaires. Six teachers were interviewed (four from the SDT and two additional teachers as advised by the consultative group) and the

questionnaires were handed to all teachers present at the school. The inclusion of the additional teachers within the interview process was an attempt to ensure representation of different people's opinions and historical connectedness to the school. The questionnaires were developed after the conclusion of all interviews, in order to triangulate the data of the interviews. In particular, the questions focused on ten areas, which include the vision, strategic planning, leadership, relationships, decision-making, governance, and management of change within the school. These items were based on the multiple 'policy-practice gap' (PPG) issues in the research literature as well as the School Improvement and School Effectiveness Research literature, in order to determine the level of functionality of CFSS.

This study is primarily a qualitative case study of the non-implementation of the DAS policy within a single secondary school. The choice of qualitative research methods demands rigour in a number of areas to ensure validity. Punch (1998, p.100) argues that validity is usually concerned with the extent to which researchers are observing or measuring what they think or wish they are measuring. In this study I took the position of Le Compte (2000) who sees validity as an issue of "creating meaningful results ... (and) ... whether the research findings seem credible to the people who were studied" (p. 152).

Although only six staff members were interviewed, they provided "information rich" cases and insight into issues central to the study (Patton, 1990). The selection of participants focused on identifying those members of the school staff who could provide insight into the dynamics of Operational Implementation at school level. Four of these staff members were associated with the core SDT involved in a voluntary, but highly active developmental team at the school. To provide perspective from outside the core group, two staff members were selected who did not work actively with the group. These individuals were selected based on recommendations of the core group and the liaison committee. "Information richness" regarding awareness of, interest in, and involvement with Operational Implementation was the underlying criteria. The validity of their statements focusing on the status and nature of operations at the school was verified through the questionnaire results from the staff.

To synthesise the views and arrive at a process which ensures the highest quality of research attention was paid to a number of issues. One is the clear explication of the research and theoretical perspectives. Another was in paying attention to the quality of the data, following the advice of several authors (e.g. Punch, 1998; Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Neuman, 2000). A further consideration suggested by Berg (1998) was the need to minimise researcher bias. Since I was one of the DAS policy formulators, this consideration demanded constant attention. This was achieved by trying to adopt a position of critical self-awareness at all stages of the research, by means of a constantly reflexive approach.

Huberman and Miles (1994) and Vidovich (2003) also stress the importance of triangulation as a means of improving the validity of the research. Triangulation has two aspects in social science research. One is a 'mode of enquiry' towards verification, "by self-consciously setting out to collect and double check findings, using multiple sources and modes of evidence" (Huberman and Miles, 1994, p. 438). The other aspect is that understandings or perceptions are more generalisable if they appear in more than one source. Both of these approaches were used in this study, through the use of different data collection methods and the range of sources within each method. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993, p.400) summarise this succinctly:

When a conclusion is supported by data collected from a number of different instruments, its validity is thereby enhanced. This kind of checking is often referred to as triangulation.

## **1.9 Significance of the study**

The new democratic government of South Africa has been faced with serious challenges around policy implementation, especially in education. If transformation is going to be achieved, the problems causing non-implementation must be solved. The aim of this study is therefore to contribute meaningfully to this solution. In essence, the significance of the study could be characterised in four ways.

**1.9.1. A deep analysis of reasons for non-implementation of policy**

The study shows that the common reference to ‘policy-practice gap’ issues in the literature, both international and local, is too dismissive to render solutions owing to the general nature of the comments. Most the literature makes broad and general statements about the ‘policy-practice gap’ challenges, without identifying some solutions to overcome these gaps. Through the ‘three-by-three, nine themes’ framework, these comments are broken down in the different policy-process stages and the analytical aspects, so that these PPG issues can be addressed by roleplayers and interest groups at different stages.

**1.9.2. An ‘in-sider’ view of education policy formulation in South Africa**

The study highlights four experiential challenges within the policy-process, which stem from my involvement as a policy-maker, namely (1) improved process when developing ‘professional’ policy, (2) reassigned the influence and power-relations to the benefit of better policy development, (3) more efficient and effective technical and human systems at all levels of the education system, and (4) improved leadership and management skills at different levels of the education system. By raising these, despite the fact that more research has to be undertaken on each of them, I can potentially contribute to more successful policy-making in education.

**1.9.3. A framework that contributes to improved policy implementation**

The study highlights three insightful, conceptual components captured within the three policy-process stages, which represent a fair amount of the individual PPG issues reviewed in this study. These components are about (1) improving the commitment, professionalism and functionality levels at schools to assure workable, impactful policy implementation, (2) developing and establishing the conditions essential to successful policy implementation in districts and schools, and (3) formulating and communicating implementation timelines and support provisions consistent with policy complexity, implied depth of change and school readiness. These components are captured within the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework.

#### **1.9.4. A model for improved policy-making**

Finally, the construction of the IRC framework emerges as the ‘first leg’ of policy formulation to the ‘bottom-up’, informed approach which is currently lacking in policy-making. This framework allows policy-makers to make informed decisions (data-driven decision making) about (1) the depth of change that is needed at different schools, (2) the level of complexity of the reform policy/instrument under consideration, and (3) the Intervention Support, development and mediation needed to implement the reform policy. The ‘second leg’ will be the current ‘top-down’ process of Policy Formulation. Together, these two processes make up an approach to policy-making which this study calls the Strategic Integrated Policy-Process (SIPP) model.

### **1.10 A summary of the chapter**

Within this chapter, I give an introduction to the study, as well as an overview of what is to come in later chapters. In particular, I reflect on the major shift within the study, when the policy was not implemented at the school, which is one of five phases the study went through. These five phases represent the investigative journey of this study. Chapter 2 represents the literature review; Chapter 3 the conceptual framework; and Chapter 4 the methodology of the study.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I use the data collected through interviews, workshops, questionnaires and policy documents to reflect on the IRC framework developed in previous phase, and to test its usability in the Cape Flats Secondary School case. In particular, Chapter 5 clarifies the level of complexity of the DAS policy, by interrogating the policy documents and comments during the interviews, and by referring to the five types of policies discussed in Phase Three. In Chapter 6, I use the limited data available to ascertain the Intervention Support given to CFSS during the information workshop sessions and the Provincial Appraisal Task Team (PATT) workshop, by referring to the five condition elements necessary to successfully facilitate policy implementation. In Chapter 7, I use the data from interviews and questionnaires to determine the level of functionality and readiness of CFSS to facilitate change, by referring to the three levels of school functionality.

In Chapter 8, I synthesise the arguments from Chapter 5, 6 and 7, which is a validation of the usability of the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework since this framework allows policy-makers to make informed decisions about (1) the level of complexity of policy, (2) the level of school functionality, and (3) the level of condition elements necessary for successful policy implementation. What the current approach lacks is an integrated, 'knowledge-based', 'data-driven decision making' approach to policy-making. This integrated approach firstly takes into account the mentioned three components of the IRC framework. This 'bottom-up', 'knowledge-seeking' approach precedes the current 'top-down', uninformed approach about the different realities and contextual conditions of schools, the resources needed to implement policy successfully and the complexity of the reform policy. The reform policy is designed based on what policy-makers know about 'what is going on', and not 'despite what is going on' in schools. I therefore make an argument for the inclusion of the IRC framework within the current 'disconnected' policy-process, in order to integrate both the 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches. The combination of these approaches will be called the 'Strategic Integrated Policy-Process' (SIPP) model.

The next chapter will focus on the literature review of this study.



# Chapter Two

## The literature review

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### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the process and results of the second phase of this larger investigation – the phase in which I was challenged to establish the conceptual and research grounding for a study quite different than the one I had originally planned. Once I began interacting with the Cape Flats Secondary School (CFSS) staff in 2003, I quickly realised that they had not implemented DAS, even though they seemed committed to doing so in 2001. If I were to continue to pursue what I planned to be a ‘policy implementation’ study, there would have been nothing to report.

Hence, I was compelled to reconsider my options, and one of them seemed very fruitful. That was to transform my research into an investigation of why, under what appeared to be quite favourable conditions, CFSS had not implemented DAS. In doing so, I was entering a frequently-investigated and much-discussed area in the educational policy literature, namely the ‘gap’ between ‘**Policy Formulation**’ – what policies were asking schools to do – and ‘**Operational Implementation**’ – what was actually enacted. From all I could initially determine, that gap was wide, long, and deep, whether in North America, Europe, Asia, or South Africa. What policy makers wanted schools to do (or change) very often did not get carried out in any ‘authentic’ form; hence, the gap. I was committed to probe deeply into the reasons for this and apply my new insights to the CFSS context.

### 2.2 Investigating the policy-practice gap literature

Soon after beginning my intensive exploration of the policy-practice gap (PPG) literature in education, I encountered a serious, but familiar dilemma. Different authors meant different things when they used the same term – such as ‘policy’ – and different authors used different words for the same thing. Consequently I faced a dual challenge: first, to decode each author’s particular use of key terms and concepts related to the issues being described; and second, to decipher

exactly what was being described and in any given study or document about PPG. [University of Pretoria etd – Gallie, M \(2007\)](#)

### **2.2.1. Defining key terms**

Therefore, before proceeding with my analysis of the PPG literature, I want to establish clear definitions and labels for the important concepts found in that literature and used consistently throughout this study.

#### *2.2.1.1. Policy*

For my purposes, the term ‘Policy’ will refer to the formal documents that are enacted by governmental bodies of various kinds that require educational institutions/schools to carry out particular actions. The ‘Policy’ itself is the substance and declared aims contained in those documents. This definition is attempting to overcome the confusions between the policy as what the “ministry has promulgated” against “what the teachers do”, which may “deviate from official policy” (Samoff, 1999, p.417).

#### *2.2.1.2. Policy-Process*

The term ‘Policy-Process’ will be used explicitly to refer to the entire set of steps involved in first formulating a policy all the way to ultimately seeing it implemented in schools. This study will divide this comprehensive process into three key stages: Policy Formulation, Intervention Support, and Operational Implementation.

#### *2.2.1.3. Policy Formulation*

As used here the term ‘Policy Formulation’ refers to the first of the three key stages in the overall Policy-Process. It involves all of the steps and factors that result in a policy’s official substance, intentions, and formal approval.

#### *2.2.1.4. Intervention Support*

This is the second major stage in the overall Policy-process. It involves the marshalling and delivering of the support resources and technical assistance required by educational institutions/schools to successfully implement the substance and intent of a policy.

#### *2.2.1.5. Operational Implementation*

This is the third key stage in the overall Policy-process. It includes all of the steps and conditions surrounding the actual implementation of a policy in its intended institutions/schools and how the policy actually plays out in practice.

### **2.2.2. Summarising the vast PPG literature: The three Policy-Process stages**

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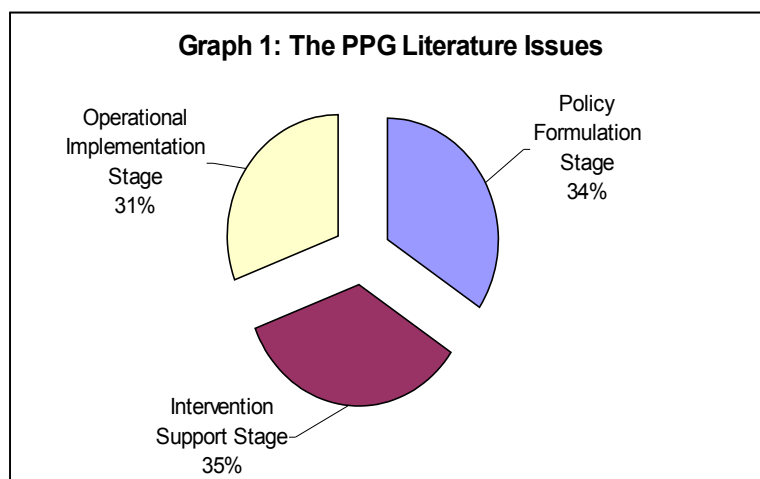
As I engaged with the vast array of journal articles, papers, books, and other documents that constituted the PPG literature, it became apparent that the range of issues, concepts, and topics being addressed was extremely broad. Hence, I quickly began to organise what I was reading around key topics and issues, often presented in multiples in a given study. Eventually I was able to identify 165 separate issues within that body of inquiry – an overwhelming number with which to work. This compelled me to find patterns and linkages among the 165 issues that would hopefully lead to a deep and coherent understanding of the gap between what policies contain and what actually gets implemented.

Slowly a broad pattern began to emerge, and it led to my identifying the three stages of the Policy-Process that I defined above. For example, after sorting things out at a very broad level, the main aspect of 57 of the 165 separate topics in the literature related directly to the ‘front end’ of the Policy-Process; that is, to how policy gets made, who the key actors are (or should be), what policies contain, the stipulations policies offer in terms of timing and conditions of implementation, and so forth. It was at this point that I chose to identify this array of factors as belonging to the Policy Formulation stage in the larger Policy-process.

Further searching and sorting led to my identifying 51 of the 165 issues whose main thrust clearly related to the ‘practice’ end of the process. They were things pertaining directly to conditions, participants, and actions that took place in the institutions themselves which affected how and whether a policy would be successfully implemented and actually incorporated into the flow of the organisation’s established practices. This large cluster of issues I grouped under the label ‘Operational Implementation’, the third stage in the overall Policy-Process.

The remaining 57 topics and issues that emerged from my literature analysis fell directly into what I have now named the ‘Intervention Support’ stage of the larger Policy-Process. In some respects this is the key link between ‘Policy’ and ‘Practice’ in what I am calling the Policy-Practice Gap (PPG) literature. And as I reflected on the critical role this stage plays in the overall Policy-Process, it

became apparent how central its factors might be in providing a possible ‘answer’ to my Cape Flats-DAS dilemma. Why did not CFSS implement DAS? Perhaps one of the reasons was that the school simply did not receive the level of technical support required by DAS, but that was certainly no more than an operating hypothesis during this phase of the work.



So, after concluding the first phase of organising my findings from the PPG literature, I identified three key stages in the overall Policy-process, across which the PPG issues in the literature were quite

evenly spread (see Graph 1). But I still faced an overwhelming number of specific topics and issues within each of those three broad categories of analysis. That challenge led to the next and a deeper level of analysis in which I sought to identify coherent and persuasive themes within these large arrays of topics that might present a more coherent picture of what the PPG literature contained, and also help to provide a penetrating understanding of my CFSS-DAS dilemma.

### 2.2.3. Summarising the vast PPG literature: The nine major themes

My second level analysis of the 57, 57, and 51 separate topics and issues in the PPG literature took a great deal of time to complete. But it yielded nine major themes whose essence brought this previously disparate mass of findings into greater coherence. As it turned out, each of the Policy-Process stages contained three clearly identifiable themes, as identified below. Each theme is expressed as a potential ‘reason why’ the PPG exists.

#### 2.2.3.1. Policy formulation themes:

- (i) *Policy makers are not developing policies that embody best ideas related to sound educational practice, facilitation approaches, and readiness conditions within provinces, districts, and schools.* This Theme One involves two sets of issues, namely the literature focusing on (1) the varied intentions of policy; and (2) the lack of ‘best ideas’ in policy.

The first focus raises issues like, the shifting intention from formulation to implementation (Rensburg, 1998); the five different levels of policy intention (Scheerens, 2000, p.1098); the need for policies based on “ethical principles” which are “morally defensible” (Joyner, 2000, p.867); the move from policy intentions other than educational (Joyner, 2000, p.870; Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.19); and the using of formal communication lines to convey policy intentions and substance to different structures (White, 1990, p.14).

The second focus includes issues where policy-makers are not using best ideas like, “the ecological, economic and management ability” within the education system (Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.14); how difficult it is “to alter an educational system that is deeply dysfunctional” (Cochran-Smith, 2000, p.916); “using managing change (that) can help avoid serious errors of commission and omission” (Dwyer, 1998, p.10); and using data and research when making policy decisions (Meyer, 2002, p.112).

*(ii) Policy makers are not formulating and communicating implementation timelines and support provisions consistent with policy complexity, implied depth of change, and site readiness.* This Theme Two involves three inter-related issues, namely (1) the types and focus of policies; (2) the difficulties experience by policy makers during policy formulation; and (3) statements about the complexity of reform policy.

The first issue focuses on the different types of policies like “the legislative and negotiated policies” (Carrim, 2001, p.103-5); the lack of “balance between economic constraints and social justice” (Skinner, 2003, p.51) and; the “five policy making theories [economic, organic system, human relations, bureaucratic, and political] and responsibility channels” (Scheerens, 2000, p.1098).

The second issue focuses on difficulties experienced by policy makers in relation to implementation provisioning, like they do not know “what they are doing ... (or) ... should be doing” to improve implementation (Pendergast, 2000, p.1); they do not know how to facilitate the “translation of policy into delivery of service” (Manganyi, 2001, p.32); they are “not always successful as (they) would like to be” (Birch, 2000, p.17); the huge

gap exist between the understanding and interpretation of policy, mainly based on perspectives, semantics and scope (Hall, 1995) and; their lack of will to “engage with differences” and to “engage in tough dialogue” result in the production of one-size-fits-all policies (Schneider, 1997, p.120).

The third issue focuses on “the quality of policies”, “the pace ... (is) fast” and “the impact ... (is) far-reaching” (Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.10); the complexity of the policy-making process (Soudien et. al., 2001, p.79; Sayed, 2001, p.250); “the scale and complexity ... (which are) ... well beyond the human and material resources available at the time” (Manganyi, 2001, p.33); the large scale bureaucratic nature of the change (De Clercq, 2002, p.91); and, that the policies are not taking into account the “conditions of teaching and the quality of learning” (Bascia, 2000, p.912).

*(iii) Top level professional, political, technical, and practitioner experts are seldom a part of formulating workable, impactful policies.* This Theme Three focuses on three issues, namely (1) the skills and capacity of roleplayers; and (2) the critique of processes during the formulation stage.

The first issue deals with the lack of research capacity and ability of ‘departmental officials’ and ‘union representatives’ (Moore and Muller, 1999, p.193); that senior officials in education display a “poverty of understanding about (the) policy-process” (Lugg, 2002, p.137); the ‘new senior level appointees’ do not have ‘system management’ skills, but rather ‘politically-correct approaches and opinions’ (Sayed and Jansen, 2001, p.6); they do not do “the necessary background research to assess the soundness and relevancy of proposed reforms” (Joyner, 2000, p.866); they do not think outside or beyond the ‘policy control’ mode of policy making (De Clercq, 2002, p.90); there are not enough African academics and researchers to challenge the dominant view of white academics in “knowledge production” (Seepe and Kgaphola, 1999; Nekwhevha, 2000, p.41); their roles and responsibilities result in “lowest common denominator agreements” and a “stakeholder process (that) has enabled the silencing of critique of the State” (Muller, 2000, p.141); they do not know the specific role of research academics and intellectuals (Leibowitz, 2000, p.7) and; they do not know the roles of supporters and critiques of

policy (Leibowitz, 2000, p.8).

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The second issue deals with the overt demand for ‘bottom-up’ policies (Oakes et. al., 2000, p.967): that it is a process of “politics”, “power”, “competing interests” and “conflicting struggles” (Jansen, 2001, p.271); that the process is invested with ‘micro-political’, ‘horse-trading’ (Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.11); that different stakeholders have different theories during policy making (Scheerens, 2000, p.1098); that the process does not recognise and accommodate the complexities of policies during the ‘continuities’ and ‘discontinuities of the different processes of policy making (Soudien et. al., 2001, p.81); that the process involves a “multiplicity of negotiations, formal and informal, and sleights of hand take place recursively” (Soudien et. al., 2001, p.79); and, that there is not balance between the ‘power of pressure’ (“too much pressure is building) to implement and the ‘power of support’ (too much support suggests the need for crutches) for teachers (Huberman, 1994, p.14).

#### 2.2.3.2. *Intervention support themes:*

(i) *Support agents are not developing and establishing the conditions essential to successful policy implementation in districts and schools.* This Theme Four focuses on two issues, namely (1) the contextual conditions (both conceptual and practical) elements need to facilitate successful policy implementation, which consist broadly of the capacity (support from outside), and the will (efforts and energies from inside); and (2) the management of change strategies by organising the work of teachers and the resources necessary to implement the reform policy.

The first issue deals with the different types of professional and organisational conditions needed (Keily, 1998, p.81-2); the level of ‘communication’ needed to successfully implement policy (Andrews and Herschel, 1996); high levels of legitimacy and ‘institutional memory’ needed (Gallie et. al., 1997, p.461); the need for a shift from ‘design control’ to ‘systemic capacity building’ (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p.643); the need for “readiness of concerned parties”, “readiness of resources”, “timeframes given to policy implementation”, and “legal preparations” (Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.16); the need to focus on “new

programmatic change”, “new teaching behaviour” and “new teaching beliefs” (Karavas-Doukas, 1998, p.13); the five elements necessary to ensure that policy implementation has a possibility to succeed (Schwahn and Spady, 1998, p.22-3); the eight contextual elements needed to develop support at a systemic level (Joyner, 2000, p.872); the need to support schools on their capacity and will that affect the outcomes of implementation (McLaughlin, 1998, p.72); the need to develop “support structures” (Lang, 2000, p.1); the need to link radical reform policies to radical change in attitude and teaching styles of teachers (Johnson, 1992, p.171) and; the need for “a new set of understandings about teaching and learning” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p.643).

The second issue deals with the high demand for good “management systems and leadership” (Gallie et. al., 1997, p.461); the need for “systems analysis, modelling and projections” to prevent “plans which are inappropriate and unmanageable” (Murray, 2002, p.72); the need to overcome “policy overload, unfunded mandates, lack of policy prioritisation and strategic planning as well as severe inherited backlogs, inadequate provincial resources and managerial capacity” (De Clercq, 2002, p.81); the need to create time and opportunity for teachers to “rethink their practice and redesign their institutions” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p.645); the need “for improvement of physical resources, dysfunctional management, poor social relations within the school, and between the school and its community, and a prevailing poor culture of teaching and learning” (Moletsane, 2002, p.132); the need to understand what motivates teachers to participate in reform policy implementation (Stout, 1996, p.2); the need “to work through ... issues on a case-by-case basis” since schools are affected differently by reform policies (Fullan, 1998, p.255); the need to create a management culture “that values such things as learning, collaborative activities, and the right to take risks must be part of the organisation” (Seller, 2001, p.257); the “need for schools to become ‘learning organisations’ where teachers and administrators become ‘change agents’ who are experts at dealing with change as a normal part of their work” (Oakes et. al., 2000, p.953).



- (ii) *Support agents are not providing the length and frequency of assistance and development consistent with policy complexity, implied depth of change, and site readiness.* This Theme Five involves “support mechanisms” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p.654) such as a methodology of ‘policy mediation’ rather than a methodology of ‘policy control’ (De Clercq, 2002, p.88); context-focused information for purposes of conciseness (Duemer, 1999); the need to monitor and evaluate the implementation on a large scale (Meyer, 2002, p.104); the need to use indicators for distinctly different purposes within the general function of monitoring (Crouch, 1998); the need to develop appreciation for good quantitative data, together with qualitative data, as a means of providing “an impression or sketched outline of the total picture” (Meyer, 2002, p.109); and the need to develop “strategic thinking about the aims and the process of implementation and coordination” (Welton, 2001, p.178).
- (iii) *Competent professional and technical support agents are not available to provide workable, impactful implementation assistance.* This Theme Six involves two issues, namely (1) the need to clarify the role definitions and responsibilities of support agents; and (2) the capacity that needs to be developed within the system.

The first issue involves the need to identify and focus on the high priorities within the system (De Clercq, 2002, p.90); the need to clarify the different roles of the constitutional arrangement of a three-tiered system (De Clercq, 2002, p.88); the significant role that teacher unions need to play during the pre-implementation phase (Joyner, 2000, p.858); the need to understand that “schools and districts are conservative rather than innovative systems, and that schools are frequently not particularly healthy organisations for the growth and development of their members” (Fullan, 1995, p.3); the need to have a strategy on how to deal with “unsympathetic administrators” (Crookes, 1999, p.281) and; the need to clarify who the “change agent” is within the policy-process (Oakes et. al., 2000, p.960).

The second issue deals with the need to manage conflict and resistance to change (Karavas-Doukas, 1998, p.26; Anderson, 1998, p.159); the need to focus on problem solving and project management approaches (Cheng

and Cheung, 1995, p.11); the need to act as “change agents in schools (which) require conceptual support to develop strategies that unabashedly confront the active ideologies that resist equity-minded changes” (Oakes et. al., 2000, p.958); the need “to make informed choices regarding the selection of reform initiatives and purposeful staff development” (Joyner, 2000, p.855); the need to develop system capacity to prevent failure of the current system (Skinner, 2003, p.52) and; the need to capacitate support agents to engage in policy analysis (Lungu, 2001, p.79).

### 2.2.3.3. *Operational implementation:*

- (i) *Site personnel are not effectively leading implementation processes consistent with the functionality levels and challenges existing in their schools.* This Theme Seven involves the needs existing at implementation level, including in particular the need for quality leaders at implementation level (Moore and Muller, 1999; Taylor and Vinjeveld, 1999); the need to de-contextualise knowledge in order to “separate it from the knower” (Moore and Muller, 1999, p.193); the need to move beyond the “instrumentalist discourse” which validates ‘experience’, ‘practice’, and what is ‘local’, ‘contextual’ and ‘school based’ (Murray, 2002, p.62) and; the need to clarify when a policy should be ‘top-down’ and/or ‘bottom-up’ (Oakes et. al., 2000, p.967).
- (ii) *Site personnel are not developing and following implementation timelines that reflect policy complexity, implied depth of change, and site functionality levels.* This Theme Eight focuses on the “pace of policy development” and the fact that site-based personnel are expected to implement the policy very “fast” at school level (Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.10).
- (iii) *Site personnel are not exhibiting sufficient commitment, professionalism, and operational functionality to assure workable, impactful policy implementation.* This Theme Nine focuses on three issues, namely (1) the professional capacity; (2) the social capacity; and (3) the combination of the professional and social capacity of the school as a reflection of the overall functionality of the school.

The first issues deal with the need to understand teachers “against the backdrop of teachers’ professional lives, within the settings where they work, and within the circumstances of that work” (Johnson and Freeman,

1998, p.405); the “inadequate preparation of teachers and administrators for service in schools, particularly those that serve low-income students” (University of Pretoria etd – Gallie, M (2007) Joyner, 2000, p.855); the “frequent turnover of leadership and school staff” (Joyner, 2000, p.855); the need to develop good “management practice” otherwise it undermines “basic expectations such as punctuality, teacher preparation and learner participation” (Gallie et. al., 1997, p.461); the need for dynamic leadership that cultivates “a shared knowledge-base and a set of practices, a strong service ethic, and control over who enters the profession and how their practices are evaluated” (Gebhard, 1998, p.507); the focus “on individual teachers is unlikely to bring about change in schools, particularly in the absence of a supportive environment” (Michael, 2000, p.8) and; that principals have “stress stemming from their incompetency and inadequacy in handling new managerial tasks” (Chow, 2000, p.19).

The second issue focuses on the notion that “schools are situated in particular local enactments of large cultural norms, rules, values and power relations, and these cultural forces promote either stability or change. Accordingly, they set the parameters of policy, behaviour, beliefs, and actions in schools” (Oakes et. al., 2000, p.958) and; that “twenty-five years of research on teaching and teacher learning argues that learning to teach is built out of and through experiences in social contexts ... And teachers and students and teaching and learning are shaped by the institutional settings in which they work” (Johnson, 2002, p.1).

The third issue focuses on the argument that “the critical variable has more to do with social and professional structures of work – with whom teachers work and how they work together – than what they bring to the job ... Although these tools come from somewhere else, however, they are always used locally.” (Freeman, 2001, p.5); that “school unions ... can be part of the solution to school reform, or part of the problem” (Joyner, 2000, p.855); that at least twelve ‘metaphors’ exist about the ‘work of teachers’ (Smyth, 2000, p.1245); that success focuses on nine practical recommendations (Hafner and Slovacek, 2000, p.11); that the success story of school change, include key elements (Gebhard, 1998, p.505); to use personal elements of teachers to provide better sense of context

through preserving the experience of those teachers (Manning, 1990); to develop understanding and clarity of the types of schools where policy implementation take place (Odden, 1991, p.2; Chisholm and Vally, 1996, p.1); to 'critically' define the nature and character of schools with their 'vast disparities' (Sayed, 2001)and; to know that schools are in reality located in societies where changes "seek to achieve parity in opportunity and achievement across diverse groups of learners" (Oakes et. al., 2000, p.953).

The argument continues by focusing on the need for supporting and empowering processes to assist teachers to move from being 'social change agents' to being 'subject or learning area specialists' at school level (Gallie, 1997); "that even the best ideas do not, indeed cannot, tell you how to get there, because that requires working in specific settings with their unique combination of factors and personalities that play themselves out in unpredictable ways ... The uncertainty about how to get there is endemic of complex systems" (Fullan, 1998, p.255); the need "to construct 'tool kits' that are capable of illuminating identified aspects of school and systems functioning sufficiently to make information-based management possible ... The task is not to describe, but to gauge ..." (Meyer, 2002, p.112); and that "what has emerged from this cross-fertilisation (of the same professional development project in two countries) is a clearer view of the importance of school culture in the nurturing and maintenance of new teaching methods ... This suggests that the problem lies not so much in the teachers' capacity, as in the environment they find themselves in, which may or may not be supportive of innovative methods" (Adey, 2000, p.6).

### **2.3 Creating a framework of key research issues**

At this stage of the analysis, I was faced with nine plausible, research-based explanations for why Cape Flats Secondary School might have failed to implement the highly promising DAS policy. The nine themes just discussed clearly fell into three groupings, those pertaining mainly to the Policy Formulation stage of the overall Policy-Process, those reflecting the Intervention Support stage, and those embodying the Operational Implementation stage.

What I noticed, however – and Table 1 on page 38 represents this – is that there were similarities in the themes across the stages. Initially, for example, it was most obvious that Themes 3, 6, and 9 all pertained quite directly to the presence or qualities of key role players (who would be expected to be involved) at each stage. So, for the time being, I considered those three themes to be a set sharing that attribute.

Upon closer examination, I observed a common pattern in Themes 2, 5, and 8 as well. They seemed to focus on the timing, duration, and adequacy aspects of the implementation process; in other words, were the timelines, deadlines, and levels of support specified in a Policy-process consistent with the implied demands of the Policy in question? So, for the time being, I considered them to be a set sharing that attribute as well.

When I turned my attention to the three remaining theme, namely Themes, 1, 4, and 7, I observed that they too shared a common characteristic. Each was describing something about the essence of what its respective stage represented in the overall Policy-process. For example, Theme 1 is about the essential quality one would expect in a policy: that is, that it embodies the best ideas available regarding sound practice so that the system would be affected positively when it was enacted on site. Similarly, Theme 4 relates to the essential thing one would expect to result from Intervention Support; namely, that it establish the conditions that make policy implementation actually happen on site. And finally, Theme 7 reflects the core of what ‘should’ happen on-site as implementation unfolds; that is, that local staff take responsibility for implementing the policy ‘on the ground’, given the ‘realities’ of their school context – particularly its functionality levels and related challenges.

These three patterns turned out to be the “three neglected aspects in the current education policy making process”, as represented in the Hodgkinson Model (see page 11). I therefore called them the Analytical Aspects of policy making.

### **2.3.1. The framework of key policy-practice gap (PPG) issues**

So in order to further organise my thinking and portray the PPG and related literature in a more coherent and systematic way, I combined these sets of themes into the matrix that appears in Table 1. The columns of the matrix portray the three, now familiar stages of the Policy-process: Policy Formulation,

Intervention Support, and Operational Implementation. I have numbered them 1, 2, and 3 just to keep things consistent. [University of Pretoria etd – Gallie, M \(2007\)](#)

Table 1: The framework of key policy-practice gap issues

	1. Policy Formulation Stage	2. Intervention Support Stage	3. Operational Implementation Stage
A. Intended Systemic Impact	<b>1A.</b> Policy makers are not developing policies that embody best ideas related to sound educational practice, facilitation approaches, and readiness conditions within provinces, districts and schools.	<b>2A.</b> Support agents are not developing and establishing the <b>conditions essential to successful policy implementation</b> in districts and schools.	<b>3A.</b> Site personnel are not effectively leading implementation processes consistent with the functionality levels and challenges existing in their schools.
B. Process Requirements and Implications	<b>1B.</b> Policy makers are not formulating and communicating implementation timelines and support provisions consistent with <b>policy complexity, implied depth of change</b> and site readiness.	<b>2B.</b> Support agents are not providing the length and frequency of assistance and development consistent with policy complexity, implied depth of change, and site readiness.	<b>3B.</b> Site personnel are not developing and following implementation timelines that reflect policy complexity, implied depth of change, and site functionality levels.
C. Essential Roleplayer Qualities and Interests	<b>1C.</b> Top level professional, political, technical, and practitioner experts are not a part of formulating workable, impactful policies.	<b>2C.</b> Competent professional and technical support agents are not available to provide workable, impactful implementation assistance.	<b>3C.</b> Site personnel are not exhibiting sufficient <b>commitment, professionalism, and operational functionality</b> to assure workable, impactful policy implementation.

The rows of the table contain the three sets of issues just described, and I have labelled them A, B, and C just to keep those elements straight. Themes 1, 4, and 7 appear in row A from left to right under the title 'Intended Systemic Impact'. From this point forward I will be calling them 1A, 2A, and 3A respectively. Similarly, Themes 2, 5, and 8 appear from left to right in row B which I have named 'Process Requirements and Implications'. They will now be called 1B, 2B, and 3B respectively. Finally, Themes 3, 6, and 9 are displayed in row C and have been relabelled 1C, 2C, and 3C respectively. That row of the table I have named 'Essential Role Player Qualities and Interests'.

When arrayed in this systematic way, the information in Table 1 allows me to

examine the substantive essence of the entire PPG literature in one coherent framework and to see patterns in this vast body of work that were clearly not evident as I examined each study separately. In addition, once I formulated it, the table served as a grounding and organiser for what unfolded in the remainder of the study.

### **2.3.2. Building an explanatory framework for the study**

With all of this analysis behind me and the framework in Table 1 in hand, I was finally in a position to develop an explanatory model for my study. The essence of the PPG and related literature gave me nine potentially fruitful starting points for what may have been the key ‘causes’ of the Cape Flats-DAS dilemma. But nine different things, even though systematically organised, seemed more like a ‘list’ than an explanatory model. So I began to examine each of the themes in Table 1 more closely, asking myself whether it was actually central to the CFSS problem, or whether it was merely a theme in the literature that did not apply directly in this particular case.

#### *2.3.2.1. Potential policy formulation stage ‘causes’*

I was encouraged by the results of my initial analysis of the Policy Formulation stage themes. First, Theme 1A having to do with the inclusion of “best practice” ideas in policies clearly did not apply to the CFSS-DAS situation. If anything, DAS was the embodiment of best practice thinking and research from the very beginning, so it had substantive ‘integrity’ (see features of DAS in Chapter One, page 5). For the same kind of reason, I could quickly eliminate Theme 1C as a factor in the CFSS situation. The developers of the DAS policy represented a variety of top level people representing all the roleplayer groups mentioned in 1C (see Chapter 1, page 6). That left 1B as a possible contributing factor from this stage of the Policy-process.

Was it possible that DAS was simply too complex and required too much deep organisational change for teachers to implement, given the timelines and requirements built into the policy? Upon deeper consideration, I was clearly willing to examine this possibility in my study.

### 2.3.2.2. *Potential intervention support stage 'causes'*

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When I turned to the three themes in the second column of Table 1, the process of elimination was a bit more difficult because there was at least a small amount of credibility in all three possibilities. However, I was eventually able to eliminate 2C as a likely factor in the CFSS situation because I, one of the developers of DAS, had provided five days of specific training to the staff in 2001 on its content, procedures, and implications. It would have been difficult for CFSS to receive support from a more qualified person than me at that point in time. Similarly, I eventually eliminated Theme 2B for the same kinds of reasons. I felt I had done a thorough job of explaining all of the features of DAS in my five day workshop, and I had encouraged questions and provided answers about every aspect of the policy. This left Theme 2A as a clear possibility. While my assistance workshop may have provided a great deal of information about DAS, I was not in a position to ensure that the conditions for successful implementation actually existed at CFSS. People told me they did, and I assumed they did, but the staff and I were actually proceeding 'on faith' about that issue at the time. Hence, I designated Theme 2A as a possible factor deserving further exploration as my study progressed.

### 2.3.2.3. *Potential operational implementation stage 'causes'*

Because I was not initially present at CFSS in 2002 either to lead, oversee, or observe the attempted implementation of DAS, I was not in a position to directly verify what was and was not happening as the school's Staff Development Team and staff moved forward with the DAS implementation. Hence, I took the word of the coordinator of the SDT about what had and had not happened at CFSS once I initially learned in 2003 that the school had not moved forward with the intended implementation plan. However, since I had conducted the five-day workshop and had worked out an agreeable timeline with the staff at that time on implementing the various components of DAS, I felt that Theme 3B pertaining to inappropriate timelines was the least likely of the three Operational Implementation themes in the PPG literature to have been a prime factor in the CFSS context.

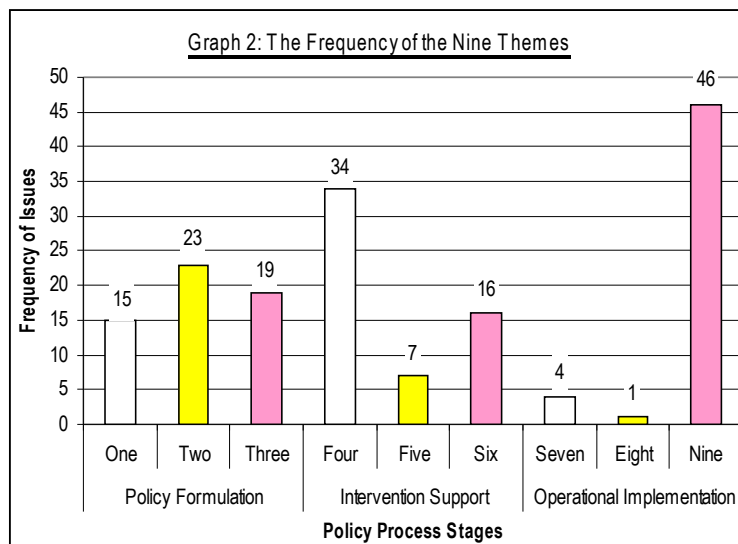
As I carefully weighed the remaining 3A and 3C themes as alternatives, it eventually became clear that one of them might potentially be an underlying determinant of the other. That is, it seemed quite possible that the failure of site



personnel to 'lead' policy implementation (Theme 3A) was because their school as a whole did not have a culture of commitment, professionalism, and high operational functionality (Theme 3C) sufficient to either value or support their initiative. Clearly my assumptions about the Cape Flats' functionality and readiness for change were quite optimistic when I first planned the study, but I had been forced to confront a different reality in 2003. Something inside the CFSS culture and operations was not what it appeared to be from the outside. Hence, I decided to look closely at 3C as a possible/probable factor in CFSS's failure to implement DAS and to learn all I could in the literature that might help me explain it.

### 2.3.3. Constructing the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework

Graph 2 displays the nine themes in the PPG literature debate. These themes are displayed in the same numerical order from left (Theme One) to right (Theme Nine being the last theme) as presented earlier in this chapter. The number appearing above each bar in the graph indicates the number of different issues in



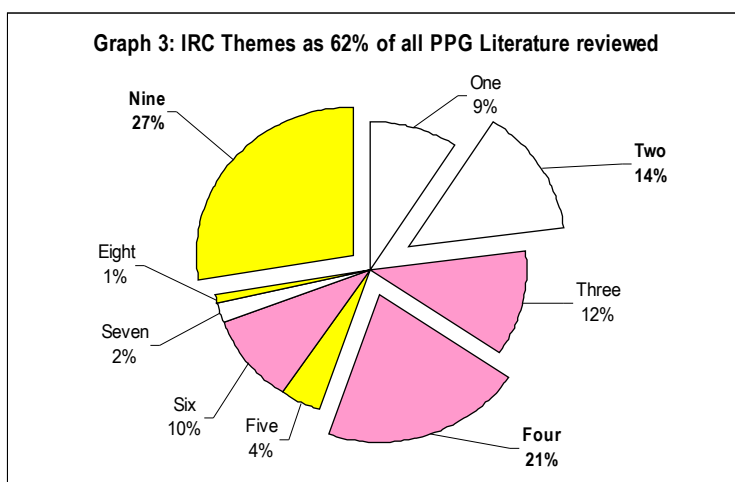
the PPG literature that are contained within each particular theme. Graph 2 clearly shows that the three themes I chose for intensive investigation in the remainder of the study (2-1B, 4-2A and 9-3C) also contain the greatest number of issues found in my analysis of the PPG

literature. For example, within the Policy Formulation stage, bar 2 represents 23 PPG issues, compared to the 15 and 19 of bars 1 and 3 respectively. This same pattern occurs in the other two stages as well. In the Intervention Support stage bar 4 contains 34 of the possible 57 issues, and the Operational Implementation stage bar 9 represents 46 of the 51 issues pertaining to that stage. Clearly, the three themes I had chosen for further investigation seem to be those receiving

the most attention in the PPG literature.

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When calculated across all 165 issues raised in the PPG literature, these three



themes (2, 4, and 9), which constitute what I am calling my Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework, account for 62% of the total of 165. This is represented in Graph 3. Note especially that the ‘functionality level of schools to facilitate

Operational Implementation’ theme (No. 9) by itself contains 27% of all the issues in the literature. The ‘awareness of complexity of policy during Policy Formulation’ theme (No. 2) represents 14% of the total, and the ‘Intervention Support agents create conditions for successful implementation’ theme (No. 4) subsumes another 21% of the 165 issues.

The next section will discuss in detail the three Themes in the IRC framework as well as other literature that directly supports them.

## **2.4 A critical review of the literature related to the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework**

The literature that is presented in this section only represents the specific issues related to the Implementation Readiness Conditions framework, both from the national and international literature. I will critically describe and review only the most pertinent references since other related studies have been cited in section 2.2.3 (pages 27-35) of this study. Where national literature is used, I will make reference to South Africa specifically. The issues I raise from international literature will not make reference to any particular country, although most of that literature comes from the UK, USA and China. The full complement of PPG issues mentioned in section 2.2.3 was used in the Human Science Research Council – Education Labour Relations Council (HSRC-ELRC) research project focusing on workplace policies for teachers, and a fair amount of the literature

was reflected within the report (HSRC/ELRC 2004, p. 5-20).

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The Implementation Readiness Conditions framework consists of the following three central themes, namely:

#### 2.4.1. The ‘Policy Complexity and Implied Depth of Change in Reform Policies’ theme

This is Theme Two in the PPG literature reviewed above. It involves the types, difficulties and complexity of reform policies. On the types of policies, Carrim (2001, p.103-5) mentions that these types (“legislative and negotiated policies”) complicate the different notions of participant fit into these different education policy-processes in South Africa. What he fails to raise is another dimension of policy difference, namely labour and professional policies (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Two different domains of the type of policies in education

Mode of Formulation	Negotiated	++	++++
	Legislated	+	++
		Labour Focus (Conditions of Service)	Professional Focus
Quality and Complexity of Policy			

The distinction of Carrim (2001) is therefore not clarifying the quality and complexity. For this, the vertical domains had to be added. Figure 3 displays the increase in complexity when formulating policy, where (+) indicates least complex and (++++) indicates most complex. Making a difference between these two domains will require a will to “engage with difference” in making these policies, and to “engage in tough dialogues”, which is often deliberately prevented, for the fear of confrontation (Schneider, 1997, p.120). If these differences are ignored, “the (different) quality of these policies”, and “the impacts of these policies” will continue to be too “far-reaching” for education systems (Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.10).

Scheerens (2000, p.1098), on the other had, developed a matrix where he displays the lack of understanding among policy makers that there are different focuses of different policies with different ‘results’, as well as the responsible agent for the policy. This complicated issue of ‘policy focus’ is summarised (see Table 2) around five main theories, namely those which are influenced by the

economic conditions, the nature of the organisation, the human relations, the mode of operation and political motive. These five theories of Scheerens (2000) only relate to the different intentions of policy as interpreted by different structures within education. He argues that by looking at the different intentions of the policy, aligned expectations must be developed in terms of its relevant “focus of result”, its “level of accountability” and the “nature of the expected output”. For example, if the intention of the policy is a human relations approach, often captured within a more specific policy title, like in the case of this study - the setting up of an appraisal system - the focus should not be on the level of results within the components of the specific policy title, but rather on the level of involvement by individuals and the possible increase in motivation and professionalism among teachers. This approach must be consistent throughout the different structures of the system. What Scheerens (2000) is not clarifying is the fact that most policies tend to want to achieve more than just one of these ‘effectiveness levels’ with one policy, which is just increasing the complexity of implementation the policy.

Table 2: Policy making theories and responsibility channels of Scheerens (2000)

<b><i>Theoretical background</i></b>	<b>Effectiveness criterion</b>	<b>Level at which the effectiveness question is asked</b>	<b>Main areas of attention</b>
<i>Economic rationality</i>	Productivity	Organisation	Output and its determinants
<i>Organic system theory</i>	Adaptability	Organisation	Acquiring essential inputs
<i>Human relations approach</i>	Involvement	Individual members of the organisation	Motivation
<i>Bureaucratic -, system member -, social psychological homeostatic theories</i>	Continuity	Organisation and individual	Formal structure
<i>Political theory on how organisations work</i>	Responsiveness to external stakeholders	Subgroups and individuals	Independence power

Related to these different theories, Soudien et. al. (2001, p.79) argue in a very abstract way that, there is a lack of understanding about the complexity and depth of reform policies at that moment of policy making in South Africa, because:

(p)olicy needs to be read as a school and a moment of engagement

in which enunciation is preceded by displacement, and where the act of inscription is fundamentally also an act of negotiation. In these terms, the object of analysis has to include, simultaneously, the policy text at its moment of generation, its implementation and indeed its analysis.

Their argument is about a lack of understanding about how the complexity of policy gets adapted to recognise and accommodate the ‘continuities’ and ‘discontinuities’ between the different policy-process stages. These include the different processes of Policy Formulation and implementation, and during the process of policy critique, because the policy arena is informed by ideology (social equality), economics (resource efficiency) and politics (social reconstruction) (Soudien et. al., 2001, p.81). For them, policy makers must realise that Policy Formulation involves “multiplicity of negotiations, formal and informal, and sleight of hands take place recursively” (2001, p.79). And even if the formulation of policies is informed by a particular ideological position, it gets influenced within the “continuum of activities and event, from the textual to the practical” (2001, p.79). Therefore, the policy implementation hardly ends up with the original intention with which it started. The different structures and people make sense of the policy as it drifts along the policy-process continuum, and contextualise and/or re-contextualise the policy to fit their needs. It is well known that Rensburg (1998), a senior official in the national Department of Education indicated at a policy conference that the intentions which drove, for example, the curriculum policy did not coincide with intentions when it had to be implemented. In his own words, he states that the curriculum was created during a ‘reconstruction and development’ era (coming up with the best possible curriculum available), while it was implemented during a ‘Growth, Economic and Reconstruction’ era (tight financial control and limited budgets). This mismatch between the thinking and resource process, points to the fact that policy makers often only have control over the thinking (policy formulation) stage, but not over the operational (policy implementation) stage.

Even Manganyi (2001), despite being an education administrator whose responsibility was to support the implementation of policies, confirms the lack of understanding about the mismatch between complexity, capacity and the difficult conditions South African teachers find themselves in by arguing that “... doing policy work involves working with scenarios; it is doing future work in the deepest sense of the word” (2001, p.27) in “a school system in which a significant number

of teachers are under-prepared and rarely teach ..." (2001, p.36). And the most difficult part of the policy-process, he argues is the "translation of policy into delivery of service" (Manganyi, 2001, p.32) by getting those who need to act on the policy to do so. As an administrator in education, Manganyi (2001, p.33) admits that "... the scale and complexity of the education changes envisaged were well beyond the human and material resources available at the time". Despite his admission to this mismatch between the intentions and human/material resources, he is not proposing a way out of this dilemma. In fact, not doing anything about the dilemma will inevitably result in 'someone' being blamed for non-implementation of policies. More often than not, teachers will bare the brunt of this non-implementation.

De Clercq further argues (2002, p.90) that there is a lack of will among policy makers to think outside or beyond the 'policy control' mode of policy making. This rational approach to policy focuses on a "strong central control" to policy analysis with an underlying thinking that "the different bureaucratic levels execute loyalty through their directives". Given the South African scenario at all levels of the education system, it is naïve to expect loyalty from all implementation agents. As indicated earlier, all current systems will benefit a portion of the population, who inevitably will find themselves even among the implementation agents, whether they are national departmental officials or teachers at school level.

The complexity of policy should also take into account the working conditions of teachers. Bascia (2000, p.899) states that it is natural for teachers to first look at how the change will influence their "working conditions", especially when the non-implementation of policies allows others to point a finger at teachers for the lack of commitment to service delivery. In such situations, teachers will retreat and defend themselves when the contextual conditions are not in their favour, like "where resources are scarce or perceived as scarce, and where there is a general lack of support for teachers' work ..." (Joyner, 2000, p.909). She argues that it is not fair to ask teachers to continue to implement and make reform policies work with so little support from the education system as a whole. She therefore makes a clear link between the conditions teachers find themselves in during the teaching process and their ability to deliver quality learning at challenging schools. The essence of this argument is about getting to know what is going on at schools. Not just looking at the 'results' coming from school but

also the conditions under which they need to be produced.

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The PPG literature mentioned above gave me a clear sense of the problem, but was short on solutions. In order to develop responses to the complexity of reform policy, I decided to seek for possible solutions in other literature in education. This literature search process delivered a collection of five types of reform policies which are currently being implemented in different countries and schools. Deeper analysis of these five types showed that the generic reference to ‘reform policy’ often mentioned in the PPG literature should be more specific. My analysis resulted in the identification of levels of complexity that move from left to right (moving from less difficult to highly difficult), namely:

(i) Single component reform

The first category of school reform policy involves policies that focus on a single component and, often, a limited grade span reform. In the literature this is also called procedural, surface or bureaucratic reform (Cousins and Simons, 1996; Scheerens, 2000; De Clercq, 2002). One example of this type of reform is Reading Recovery, a one-to-one tutoring programme originally developed by Marie Clay (1985) in New Zealand and now used in thousands of schools throughout the English-speaking world (Lyons, Pinnell and DeFord, 1993; Pinnell, 1989). Little (1994, p.2) argues that “... change in subject matter standards, curriculum content, and pedagogy increasingly aspire towards more ambitious learner outcomes”. These changes include also “the shift to a whole language and literature-based approach to language arts, the new mathematics standards, proposals for integrated science curricula and the like” (Little, 1994, p.2).

(ii) Comprehensive reform

The second type is called comprehensive reform. This is also called programmatic, substance and delivery reform (Tse, 1982; Considine, 1992; Cheng and Cheung, 1995). The growing appeal of the comprehensive reform approach is rooted in its many advantages. The first advantage is that its adoption encourages the termination of single-focus reforms, thereby preventing the fragmentation associated with these traditional reform efforts (Glennan, 1998). At the core of comprehensive school reform is a unifying vision, or mission, one that offers an integrated approach across all grade levels, all students, and all elements of school practice (Bodilly, 1998).

Its second advantage is that it provides schools with access to external assistance and expertise. A number of school designers have developed comprehensive reform models for Pre-primary to Grade 12 schools. School designers offer assistance to schools, usually for a fee, to help them transform themselves.

The third advantage of this type of reform approach is that it introduces quality control mechanisms often lacking from previous reform efforts. Comprehensive designs bring with them a clear blueprint for changing a school's educational standards, curriculum, and instructional practice. These blueprints not only give schools a clear path to reform but also make it easier for educational researchers to evaluate the effects of comprehensive reform efforts on educational outcomes (Bodilly, 1996; Fashola and Slavin, 1998; Ross et. al., 1997; Slavin, 1995; Stringfield, Millsap and Herman, 1997).

A fourth advantage is that it provides schools with specific learner materials, teachers' manuals, focused professional development, and relatively prescribed patterns of staffing, school governance, internal and external assessment, and other features of school organisation. The American 'Success for All' and 'Roots & Wings' programmes provide the most elaborate examples of this approach (Slavin, Madden, Dolan and Wasik, 1996; Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross, Smith and Dianda, 1996). Success for All, in use in more than 475 U.S. elementary schools in 31 states and adapted in four other countries, provides specific curriculum materials for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and Grades 1-6 reading, writing, and language arts. Roots & Wings adds to this also materials in mathematics, social studies, and science. Both programmes provide one-to-one tutoring to: primary-grade learners who are struggling in reading; family support teams to build positive home-school relations and deal with such issues as attendance, behaviour, health, and mental health; and to help teachers implement and coordinate all programme elements. The 'Core Knowledge' project (Hirsch, 1996; Mentzer and Shaughnessy, 1996) and the 'Modern Red Schoolhouse' (Kilgore, Doyle and Linkowsky, 1996), which uses Core Knowledge materials, are two additional approaches that also have relatively well-specified approaches to curriculum and instruction.



(iii) Organisational development reform

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The third type of reform is called organisational development. It is also called “technical skills, ability and process” reform (Karavas-Doukas, 1998; Michael, 2000; Goodson, 2000; Motala, 2001). This dominant approach engages school staff members in an extended process of formulating a vision, creating work groups to move toward implementation of that vision, identifying resources (such as external assistance, professional development, and instructional materials) to help the school toward its vision, and often locating “critical friends” to help the school evaluate and continually refine its approaches. In the U.S., the largest networks of this kind are Sizer's (1992) Coalition of Essential Schools, currently approaching a thousand middle and high schools, and Levin's (1987) Accelerated Schools network, with more than 900 mostly elementary and middle schools.

Another widespread model of this kind is the National Alliance for Changing Education, closely affiliated with the New Standards Project, which is an important organisation in the promotion of State and district systemic changes around standards, assessments, and accountability (Rothman, 1996). Comer's (1988) School Development Project has more specific guidelines for activities relating to parent participation and integrated approaches to mental health and self-esteem, but in the instructional arena it also asks each school to create its own approaches to curriculum, instruction, and professional development. The National Alliance and Comer projects also serve hundreds of schools throughout the U.S. Dozens of smaller networks of changing schools also exist, including the Carnegie Corporation's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (Jackson, 1990; Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand and Flowers, 1997), the Paideia Network built around the work of Mortimore Adler (1982), the Foxfire network, Carl Glickman's School Improvement League, and the ATLAS project, which incorporates elements of Sizer's and Comer's programmes (Orell, 1996). This approach to educational change is also common outside of the U.S.

In Canada, the Learning Consortium is a network of schools influenced by the work of Michael Fullan (1991). In Britain, IQEA (Improving the Quality of Education for All) promotes a dual focus on the internal conditions of schools and the enhancement of classroom practice (Hopkins, Ainscow and West, 1994). The National Schools Network in Australia and the Thousand Schools Project in South Africa are additional examples. These projects have in common a

philosophy of change calling on teachers and administrators to find their own way to change with some guidance from the national project, but they provide few if any learner materials, teachers' guides, or specific approaches to instruction.

Little (1994, p.3) argues that these change proposals promote a more widespread and rigorous use of authentic assessment. Yet the technical advances in assessment have typically lagged behind the formulation of standards and the advances in curriculum design. At a local level, schools embark on reinventing themselves, teachers wrestle with the criteria for good work and the forms in which it might be expressed.

#### (iv) Redesign reform

The fourth type is called redesign reform. This is also called structural (or work arrangement, roles and responsibilities) reform (Manning, 1990; Cousins and Simons, 1996; Duemer, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Adey, 2000; Lang, 2000; Joyner, 2000; Motala, 2001; De Clercq, 2002). Little (1994, p.3) argues that these reforms call for a more systemic change that permeates the school structure. These initiatives are oriented towards principles, not programmes and specific practices. One example involves the redesign of secondary schools (Sizer, 1992).

For Wilson and Daviss (1994, p.24), the “pressures forcing the creation of a new educational vision are precisely the same ones forcing our economy to reinvent itself – pressures that value mind over muscles, process before product, and quality above quantity.”

#### (v) Rethinking reform

The fifth type is called rethinking reform. It is also called paradigm (or redefining the purpose and system of education) reform (Hall, 1995; Moore and Muller, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Joyner, 2000; Hannay et. al., 2001; Sayed and Jansen, 2001; Welton, 2001; Smith and O'Day, 2001; De Clercq, 2002). Among its examples, one would include conceptions of “authentic achievement” that require a fundamental change in the nature of learners' intellectual tasks and teacher-learner relations (Newmann, 1990). These changes constitute a departure from canonical views of curriculum and from textbook-centred or recitation-style teaching. They represent, on the whole, a substantial departure from teachers' prior experience, established beliefs, and present practice.

Indeed, they hold out an image of conditions of learning for children that their teachers have themselves rarely experienced. [University of Pretoria etd – Gallie, M \(2007\)](#)

Little (1994, p.3) argues that these 'professionalisation' changes centre on teachers' demonstrated knowledge base, on conditions surrounding teacher certification and licensure, and on the structure of career opportunities in teaching. These reforms support (1) a sustainable well-prepared and stable teacher workforce; (2) the assurance of accountability for learner outcomes; and (3) expanded opportunity and rewards in exchange for increased obligations. Teachers are expected to contribute to the support of beginning teachers and to participate in other ways in the improvement of schooling and teaching.

Fine (1992, p.2) puts it that this reform approach pursues the "big systemic, educational question ..." of transforming whole systems into "educationally and emotionally rich communities of learners". This suggest quite a different organisation of learning opportunity (and obligation) than one that supplies teachers with measured increments in knowledge, skill and judgement for a known pool of effective classroom practices.

In summary, this set of literature reflects on both the literature indicating the complexity of reform policy, as well as literature attempting to define the levels of complexity. The first set of literature review reflects on the problems of non-implementation that have their origin in the way the policy was conceptualised and developed. These include issues like the multiple types of policy making theories which serve different areas of attention, focus and levels of effectiveness. The second set of literature focuses on five different reform policies and also arranges them into levels of complexity.

The next section will focus on the support that needs to be rendered to schools in order to facilitate successful policy implementation.

#### **2.4.2. Establishing the necessary conditions essential to successful policy implementation**

People involved in the policy implementation support stage are located in such a unique position to assist in reducing the gap between policy and practice because it is the stage that can facilitate the communication between the Policy Formulation stage and the Operational Implementation stage. Cheng and Cheung (1995) argue in their Frame 3 that there is a lack in readiness conditions

to implement policy. They describe the “gaps between implementation and planning” (Cheng and Cheung, 1995, p.16), as a product of policy implementation analysis. Here, the state of preparedness was highlighted, raising the following issues:

(a) The Readiness of Concerned Parties, like administrators, teachers, learners and parents to deal with the change in cognitive, psychological and technological domains; (b) Readiness of Resources, like human resources, facilities, space, monetary resources, etc.; (c) Time Frames given to policy implementation, like time available, implementation stages and realistic schedules, and; (d) Legal Preparations, like the regulatory process of the policy and the legal rights of those concerned. Furthermore, they reminded us of the different levels of planning that would be affected by policy, namely the (1) system level, (2) organisational level, (3) classroom/ individual level, and (4) congruence between levels.

Karavas-Doukas (1998, p.31) argues that there is a lack of understanding among policy makers and bureaucrats about factors for successful innovation support. Educational changes need to be looked at from three different levels during the implementation support stage, namely (1) the new programmatic changes in the policy; (2) the new teaching behaviour; and (3) the new teaching beliefs. The author continues by linking these requirements to five factors, namely:

... (1) teachers' attitudes; (2) clarity of the innovation proposal; (3) teacher training; (4) communication and support during implementation; and (5) compatibility of the innovation with the contingencies of the classroom and the wider educational context.

Karavas-Doukas (1998, p.104) furthermore senses that more is needed and states:

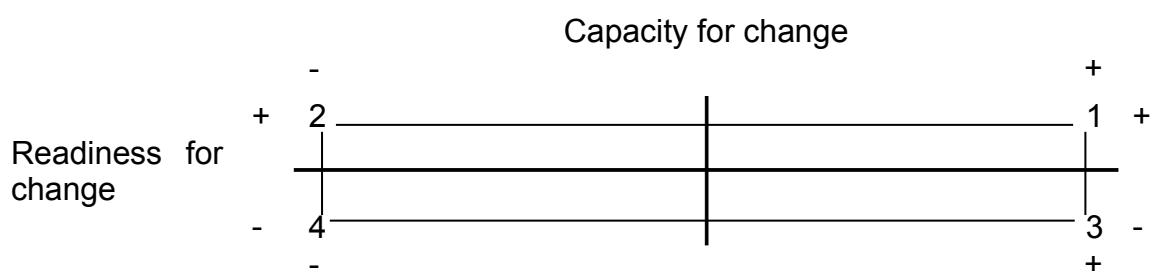
... we need a better understanding of how teachers meet the demands of programme design and implementation in specific situations, both to provide a better foundation for classroom innovations and to develop our approach to professional development.

The author, though, stops short of making the link to the management of the specific innovation and the support needed to implement the reform policy. The usefulness of the argument of Karavas-Doukas (1998) is located in the three clearly-defined areas that support change, namely (1) an understanding (knowledge) of the reform policy; (2) the capacity and capabilities (skills) to effect the change; and (3) the belief (right attitude) in the contribution of the reform policy. Murray (2002, p.72) argues that South Africa needs quality “systems

analysis, modelling and projections” which will assist support to teachers and prevent “inappropriate and unmanageable” plans (Murray, 2002, p.72). These analyses will highlight the need “for improvement of physical resources, dysfunctional management, poor social relations within the school, and between the school and its community, and a prevailing poor culture of teaching and learning” (Moletsane, 2002, p.132).

Welton (2001, p.180) argues that policy makers and departmental officials lack the ability to analyse the balance between ‘capacity to change’ and the ‘readiness for change’ at institutional level. As displayed in Figure 4, he indicates the ‘capacity to change’ at the horizontal axis, and the ‘readiness for change’ on the vertical axis. The left side of ‘capacity for change’ will be negative and the right side will be positive. Likewise, the bottom side of the ‘readiness for change’ will be negative and the top side will be positive. He states that implementation will have no chance to succeed when the institution is at level 4 (both negative in ‘capacity to change’ and ‘readiness for change’), while level 1 (both positive in ‘capacity to change’ and ‘readiness for change’) will be the optimum level for implementation. When the institution is at level 2 or 3 (both have one positive and one negative axis), the implementation process is risky (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Institutional state of implementation



Welton (2001, p.180) further raises the question whether or not policy-makers understand the need for ‘pre-implementation’ work before policy implementation. The necessary ‘pre-implementation’ work must be done by government structures or policy makers before the process moves on to the implementation level. The abovementioned two components, ‘capacity to change’ and ‘readiness for change’ are prevalent to all policies eliciting a move away from the status quo. ‘Readiness for change’ refers to ‘an attitude’ or ‘ownership’ problem, while ‘capacity to change’ refers to ‘a skill or resource’ problem. What is lacking in this discussion is who should support schools to ensure the presence of both these

components, as well as who should make the call about whether or not a school should go ahead with the policy implementation. The evaluation whether a school falls within level 1,2,3 or 4 is an important activity that must be located with the correct support agency as well as the school community since the 'capacity to change' should be the responsibility of the departmental officials while the 'readiness for change' should be the responsibility of the school community.

The research work of Schwahn and Spady (1998, p.22-23) focuses specifically on the elements needed for successful operational implementation. They argue that there is a lack of assistance among departmental support staff in creating the necessary condition elements that should be present at schools during reform policy implementation. They suggest that the reform policy-process needs five conceptually elements necessary in ensuring that operational implementation has a possibility to succeed, namely:

- (1) Purpose - a clear and compelling purpose for the desired change;
- (2) Vision - a concrete and inspiring vision of the desired change in ideal form;
- (3) Ownership - strong ownership for the desired change among those affected by it;
- (4) Capacity - broad capacity and skills for implementing the desired change, and;
- (5) Support - tangible organisational support for making the desired change happen.

The research they synthesise indicates that policies are often irrelevant to the context of implementation, or have little hope of succeeding if these key components are not present in schools. Therefore, when attempting to implement policy in schools without these five components, policies are actually not tested but rather their possibility for success is undermined. Without these elements, the policy does not have the chance to be successful since with the absence of, for example, a clear purpose of the policy, teachers will constantly differ on the usefulness of the policy. Therefore, those schools in need of these five elements should not be exposed to reform policies without establishing these elements within their schools. What is absent in their argument is how to get schools to develop these necessary condition elements, especially in schools where education is seen as an isolated activity (teachers only focus on what they individually see as important, without working together). Furthermore, they assume that an agreement on the conceptual (thinking) issues would lead to teachers acquiring the skills and capacity (doing) to implement the policy.

Joyner (2000, p.872) is more practical by arguing that these condition elements refer to a lack of understanding of the contextual elements (eight) that need to be developed by departmental support staff at schools when implementing reform policies at a systemic level, namely (1) leadership; (2) political stability; (3) expected levels of cooperation; (4) knowledge of the reform; (5) understanding of processes and relationships; (6) ability and willingness to support the change; (7) overall administrative capacity, and (8) fiscal capacity. Reflecting on the two sets of elements by Schwahn and Spady (1998) and Joyner (2000), one can see a close link between these elements. For example, there is a link between leadership and capacity, knowledge of reform to vision, etc. Again, Joyner (2000) is not explaining who and how these elements must be achieved at school level. For example, is the reference to leadership to positional leadership or to motivational leadership – a person(s) best placed and capacitated to lead the reform process?

At institutional level, McLaughlin (1998, p.72) refers to these condition elements as the lack of assistance by departmental support staff in developing at school level the necessary capacity and motivation that will affect the outcomes of the implementation process. When the reform policy is transformative, it expects the people, the organisation, the structures and resources to be used in a fundamentally different way to what they have been used before. “The presence of will or motivation to embrace policy objectives or strategies is essential to generate the effort and energy necessary to a successful project.” Here, McLaughlin (1998) is clarifying the will to change through two elements, namely the effort and energy to succeed. The will or motivation stems from having a clear purpose and vision of the change, as well as the capacity and support for the change (Schwahn and Spady, 1998). McLaughlin (1998) is not making a distinction between the will to implement a policy, and having the willingness to add value to the process, whatever it may be to make it successful (meaning the effort and energy). Often, having the will is linked to a political intention, while having the willingness to do it is based on the skills and capacity to do what is required to succeed.

In summary, this section reflects on three main themes, namely (1) the contextual conditions (both conceptual and practical) elements needed to facilitate successful policy implementation which consist broadly of the capacity (support

from outside) and the will (efforts and energies from inside); (2) the management of change strategies by organising the work of teachers and the resources necessary to implement the change policy; and (3) most importantly how to support both the contextual conditions elements and change management in order to restore faith in the support system in education.

The next section will focus on the level of school functionality needed during the Operational Implementation stage.

### **2.4.3. The professionalism and level of functionality of the school at the operational implementation**

This section starts with the debate of Sayed (2001) about the “vast disparities” among different schools in South Africa. This demonstrates the lack of understanding among policy makers and bureaucrats about how to define ‘critically’ the nature and character of different schools in the country. He argues that it has become important to acknowledge that developing policy for implementation and impact in the same way in all schools is not useful since schools are not the same. Sayed (2001) does not specify these disparities. His contention that “schools are not the same” is too vague a statement to be helpful.

Fullan (1998, p.255) contributes more specificity to the debate by arguing that specific setting prevails in different schools. He outlines an approach for addressing this specific change management difficulty, by advising that:

(a)n even more basic problem is that even the best proven ideas do not, indeed cannot, tell you how to get there, because that requires working in specific settings with their unique combination of factors and personalities that play themselves out in unpredictable ways.

Although his argument is raised within a very theoretical way, the essence of the argument is that treating all schools as if they are the same is not wise.

From a South African point of view, Meyer (2002) argues that the lack of having a full picture of school performance and system functionality is due to the unreliable data systems. Meyer (2002, p.112) argues that what is often missed is the realisation that:

... not even the richest qualitative description can yield a complete picture or full knowledge of the facts of reality ... they can only signify. ... We have to give up the ideal of certainty, of ever knowing anything fully. ... It allows, even challenges, us to treat all



information and all methods as limited and partial, to take all analysis with a grain of salt. University of Pretoria etd – Gallie, M (2007)

The abovementioned problem can be solved by policy makers when they:

... construct 'tool kits' that are capable of illuminating identified aspects of school and systems functioning sufficiently to make information-based management possible ... focus on the main objective: to obtain adequate information and understanding as a basis for defensible professional judgement. The task is not to describe, but to gauge ... (Meyer, 2002, p.112)

Meyer's point that qualitative data might not be the only reference of understanding schools is very important.

Gebhard (1998) describes a school where key process elements for policy implementation were developed, despite the lack of support from educational support staff in creating these reform elements. The school "cultivated a teaching faculty that had developed a shared knowledge-base and a set of practices, had a strong service ethic, and had control over who enters the profession and how their practices are evaluated" (Gebhard, 1998, p.507). The presence of a dynamic leadership was crucial to the success of the school, but the author is silent about the nature and characteristics of this dynamic leadership.

Manning (1990) on the other hand focuses on the individuals by stating that policy makers and departmental officials make a serious mistake by not utilising the 'personal elements' of individual teachers in the implementation stage of policy. The exclusion of personal elements is motivated by policy makers using 'a rational decision-making framework' of policy implementation where individual compliance is expected. He argues that the use of the personal element provides a better sense of context through preserving the experiences of those who were involved in policy implementation.

Michael (2000, p.7) argues that there is a lack of capacity among educational support staff in South Africa to create supportive environments that will facilitate policy implementation at school level. He lists seven key principles, one of which is that "it is critical that the school management teams and governing bodies support changes being made by teachers in their classrooms." (Michael, 2000, p.8) He continues by stating:

... however, the experience of this phase emphasised, more than

anything else, that focusing on individual teachers is unlikely to bring about change in schools, particularly in the absence of a supportive environment" (Michael 2000, p 8).

As was pointed in the review of Michael's report (2000), it is rare that a professional development project addresses directly and with some practical relevance the issue of change management and effective implementation.

Adey (2000, p.6) continues on this point by arguing that policy makers lack the understanding of the cultures that prevail within different schools. He states:

(w)hat has emerged from this cross-fertilisation (of the same professional development project in two countries) is a clearer view of the importance of school culture in the nurturing and maintenance of new teaching methods...This suggests that the problem lies not so much in the teachers' capability, as in the environment they find themselves in, which may or may not be supportive of innovative methods."

Again, he makes the link between the school culture and the way teachers teach. An environment that is hostile towards teachers will force them to 'protect themselves' (closing up, defending oneself). Adey (2000) is not clarifying what will happen if the policy is expecting teachers to declare openly their 'weaknesses', what teachers have to do when they find themselves in hostile environments.

Oakes et. al. (2000) state that there is a lack of understanding among policy makers and educational support staff on how to create a 'learning organisation' in a context of power, conflicting interest and struggles. Oakes et. al. (2000, p.953) state that there is:

... the need for schools to become 'learning organisations' where teachers and administrators become 'change agents' who are experts at dealing with change as a normal part of their work. Consequently, the lessons that teachers learn from the change literature are overwhelmingly in the nature of neutral ... (p.953).

This research therefore reflects on the interest of teachers, rather than the interest of policy makers and departmental officials. They remind readers that teachers are not neutral in the education process, and their interests must be seen as part of the components that influence success or failure in organisations. Again, the researchers are not clarifying how the interest of the education system and the interest of teachers must be balanced, if any.

Chow (2000) continues on the theme of leadership by expressing the problem of

implementation as a lack of capacity among educational support staff to develop capable school leaders. <sup>University of Pretoria etd – Gallie, M. (2007)</sup> The author notes that school leaders must become more introspective and encourage more participatory decision-making with teachers. Chow (2000, p.19) further argues that the principals:

... would rather adopt instructional bureaucratic leadership to control their teachers than using facilitative and collaborative leadership to empower their staff.

Their approach to leadership could be the result of their inadequate capacity as it is noted that principals have “stress stemming from their incompetency and inadequacy in handling new managerial tasks” (Chow, 2000, p.19). Perhaps this is why new reform policies are “rarely” (Chung, 2000, p.5) sustained in practice at schools. The lack of capacity tends to lead to the adoption of the bureaucratic approach. What the author is not clarifying is whether competency should lead to a more participatory approach to leadership.

In summary, this section reflects on the functionality of schools by reflecting on two broad themes with seven issues each, namely (1) the internal differences in a school by looking at the support structures, enabling environment, available resources, community it serves, capacity of individuals and collective, relationships between different individuals and groups, and the leadership to manage the change; and (2) the internal differences in teachers by looking at their work, their interests, their development, their beliefs, their reasoning, their buy in, and their mission for being involved in education.

## **2.5 A summary of the chapter**

This chapter critically examines the existing literature on policy making, organisational change and change management in education, and provides a critical reframing of that literature. It establishes that a large volume of research has been conducted on PPG issues – the substance and demands built into reform policy and the processes and stages necessary to support their implementation effectively.

Both international and local literature question the development of complex and in-depth reform policies by policy makers, without their fully understanding and conceptualising the systemic change and resource demands that their policies imply and require. South African research in particular indicates that the policy-

making process is even more challenging locally, given the lack of resources and capacity at all levels of the system, especially at school level. Although these studies often focus on limited physical and financial resources, 'the willingness to make things happen' might be a more important missing resource in the system. Compounding this oversight is the lack of understanding of the diverse levels of school functionality where policy needs to be implemented. Therefore, setting short term, evaluative and monitoring targets could be more useful than ignoring the problem of available information on schools.

The literature on the Intervention Support stage and arguments about the need to support schools more in implementing reform policies are clear. How these schools might be supported is not clear from the arguments, other than the general debate about continuous professional development and staff development. Dalin (2000, p.1068) argues for the inclusion of the local capacity around schools, as support to policy implementation at the school level. Some literature questions the capacity of departments of education to render these support services to schools. Given this opinion, clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the different structures in the education system is important. As soon as clarity is established about the roles and responsibilities of especially the district departments of education, employment requirements and skills should be in line with the expected role responsibilities of these officials. For example, the local literature questions the capacity of the new senior officials within the education departments, especially their ability to manage large bureaucracies. If it is the role of senior officials to have the skills of managing large bureaucracies, then selection and appointment systems must put these skills as a high priority.

The Operational Implementation stage literature focuses mostly on the need for support schools to get ready for implementation and understanding the types of schools (referring mostly to resource capacity) within the education system. Linked to this point is the demand for schools to be learning organisations and systems oriented. A large section of the literature questions whether policy makers understand the current working conditions and the work of teachers at school level. This, in particular, relates to the working environment of teachers, teachers' skills and capacity, the lack of management support to teachers, the opportunity for teachers to discuss and engage with colleagues, and for teachers to familiarise themselves with the new understanding about teaching and

learning. Policy makers therefore have to understand the practical institutional difficulties which teachers deal with every school day, before teachers consider implementing reform policies formulated by 'outsiders'. Finally, the literature reminds policy-makers that teachers are influenced by personal and institutional factors when they have to implement reform policies, therefore their opinions must be taken seriously.

This critical review of the literature assists me to understand the three stages of policy making, and the distinct limitations and opportunities which exist within these stages, in making the implementation of policy more difficult or to be sensitive to the challenges of teachers who need to implement the policy.

The next chapter focuses on the conceptual framework for the entire study.

# Chapter Three

## The conceptual framework of the study

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### 3.1 Introduction

A review of the PPG and other literature was conducted in the preceding chapter in order to develop the rationale for the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework. A number of pertinent assertions emerge as a result of the three-by-three matrix and the subsequent literature engagement in the IRC framework. These assertions are discussed in this chapter. These discussions form the basis for the concluding phase of this study, namely the development of the 'Strategic Integrated Policy-process' (SIPP) model for policy making in South Africa.

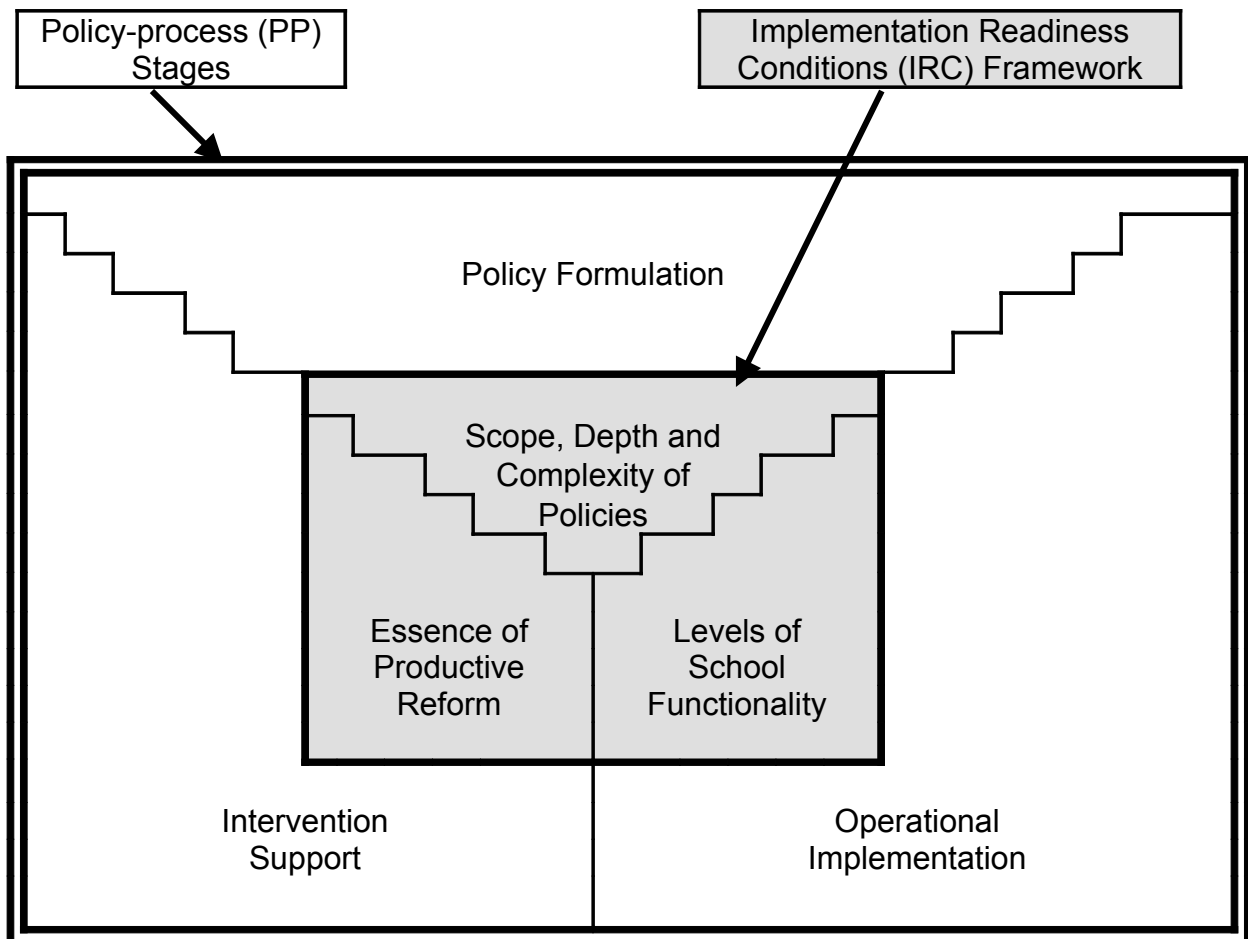
### 3.2 The Conceptual Framework

The non-implementation of the DAS policy led to the investigation of the 'Policy-Practice Gap' (PPG) literature. This PPG literature investigation in Chapter 2 yielded the design of the 'Key Policy-Practice Gap' matrix. This matrix represents within its design, the two big conceptual organisers of this study namely (1) the Policy-Process (PP) stages; and (2) the Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework. The policy-process includes three stages namely the Policy Formulation, the Intervention Support and the Operational Implementation stage. The IRC framework includes three themes which were identified as potential reasons why the DAS policy was not implemented (see Figure 5).

In this section, I will discuss the current policy-process and the one-dimensional perspective within it. Owing to its limited perspective, this process does not render any clarity to the current non-implementation of policy. This limitation led to the investigation of the 'PPG literature and the construction of the 'Key Policy-Practice Gap' matrix. The matrix highlighted three issues which could potentially result in why the DAS policy was not implemented, which I call the IRC framework. Furthermore, the matrix highlighted among the IRC framework and other issues, the distinct three perspectives of looking at the policy-process. In particular, the IRC

framework represents one of the three perspectives. I will then explain how the three components of the IRC framework individually assist and collectively enrich my understanding of the reason for the non-implementation of DAS. Finally, I propose a solution to overcome the current 'disconnected' policy-process, called the Strategic Integrated Policy-process (SIPP) model. This model represents the two dominant perspectives in policy making, namely the Policy Makers and Teacher perspective.

Figure 5: Two big conceptual organisers



### 3.2.1. The policy-process

The policy-process is described in the literature under different names, but they all identify three distinct stages, i.e. the Policy Formulation, Intervention Support and Operational Implementation stages. Understanding the unique and related role and responsibility of roleplayers within each of these stages is critical when studying non-implementation of policy.

The current policy-process in South Africa, often the source of critique of policy implementation evaluators, is a linear, one-dimensional, one-directional, instructional, authoritarian, ‘top-down’ approach where Intervention Support follows on Policy Formulation and Operational Implementation follows on Intervention Support (see Figure 6). The most common critique of this approach is when teachers at school level blame those who formulate the policy for ‘not knowing what is going on at school level’.

Figure 6: The current policy-process in South Africa



Since the Ministry of Education has included various roleplayers within the policy formulation process from 1994, roleplayers other than the education officials could not use the ‘common critique’ of non-implementation, as mentioned earlier. It was only through deeper analysis of the ‘Key PPG Issues’ matrix, that clarity arose on why the policy could not be implemented. This matrix separates the type of roleplayers involved from the perspective taken on by different roleplayers in the policy-process. By using the same symbols in the ‘Key PPG Issues’ matrix (Chapter 2, page 39), I display the three distinct roleplayer perspectives.

Figure 7: The three distinct roleplayer perspectives (lenses)

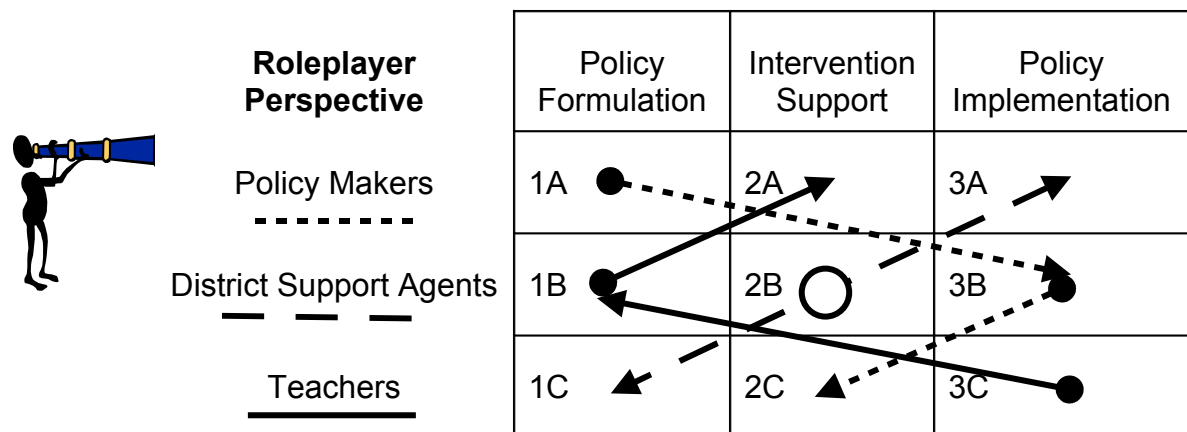


Figure 7 displays the three ‘process lenses’ which represent three different interest groups in the policy-process. First, policy makers focus on formulating the ‘best possible policy’ [1A], then assume that teachers will ‘implement the policy as defined



by them' [3B], and then finally they assume the 'presence of competent support agents' [2C]. Second, district support agents consider the 'length and frequency of assistance needed by schools' [2B], then reflect on 'the workability and impactfulness of the policy' [1C], and finally look at 'the readiness of schools' [3A]. Third, teachers on the other hand reflect on 'the contextual conditions at school level' [3C], then focus on the 'complexity of the policy and the depth of change' [1B], and finally reflect on the 'availability of assistance to create the conditions essential to successful policy implementation' [2A]. Within these perspectives, all roleplayers will focus on the three policy-process stages, but they focus on their own interests.

Through the process of elimination in Chapter 2, I clearly identified the dominant 'policy maker perspective' within the DAS policy. And since the 'intervention support perspective' is legally within South Africa the responsibility of provincial and district support officials, the most neglected interests within the DAS policy is the 'teacher perspective'. The IRC framework, therefore, represents the 'teacher perspective', as the reason why roleplayers struggled with the implementation of DAS.

### **3.2.2. Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC)**

The Implementation Readiness Conditions framework represents three dimensions namely (1) the complexity of reform policy; (2) the essential elements necessary for successful policy implementation and (3) the level of functionality of the school.

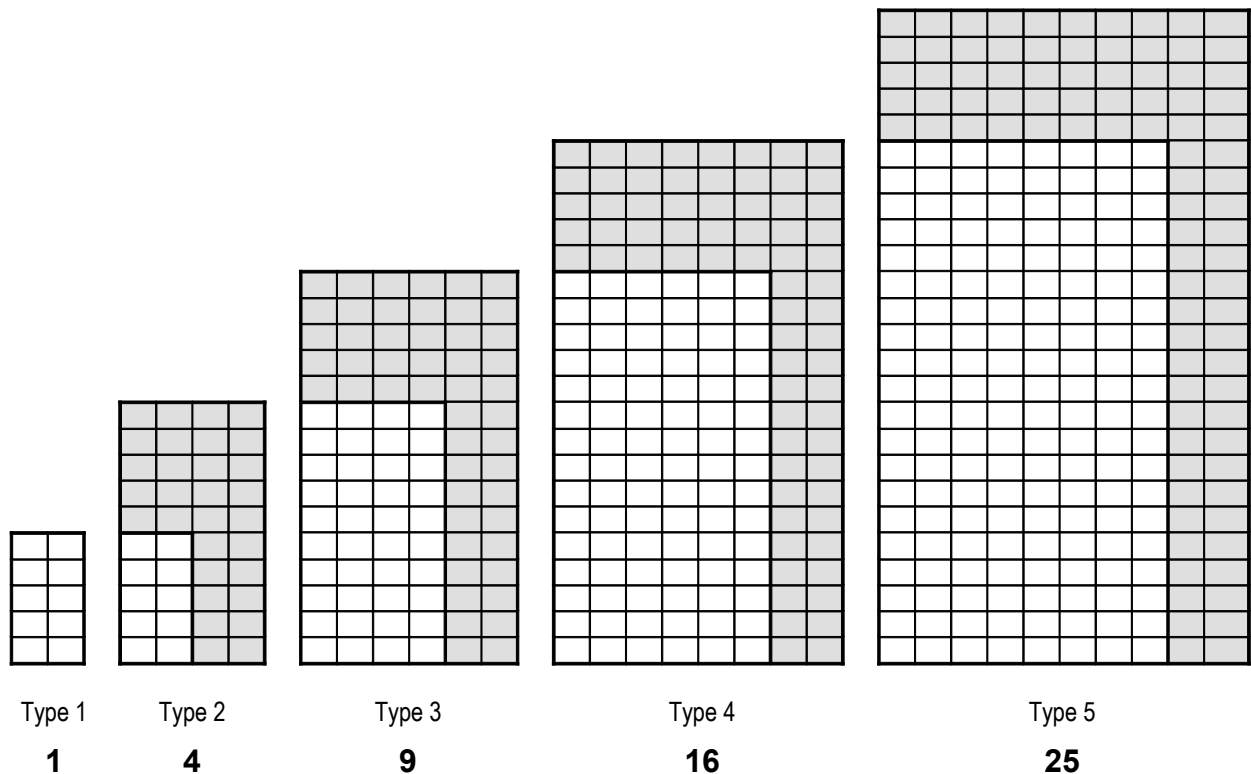
#### *3.2.2.1 Level of complexity, depth and intensity of reform policy*

The first dimension of this concept focuses on the complexity, depth and intensity of the reform policy. Again, it is not the purpose of this study to define the different types of reform policies that might exist, but rather to indicate conceptually that policies vary in the challenges they pose to schools. For the purpose of clarifying this argument, I will make use of the five types of reform policies identified in Chapter 2. My assumption is that the level of complexity and intensity of these policies will increase in difficulty from Type 1 to Type 5 policies (moving from Type 1 policy as less complex to Type 5 policy as highly complex). Furthermore, Type 1 policies will focus on change that challenges the individual's practice; Type 2 policies will focus on change that challenges individual and team practice; Type 3 policies will focus on change that challenges individual and team practice; Type 4 policies will focus on change that challenges individual, team and institutional practice; Type 5 policies will focus on change that challenges individual, team and institutional practice.

4 policies will focus on change that challenges individual, team, institutional and entire system, and; Type 5 policies will focus on change that challenges individual, team, institution and systemic roleplayers to re-defining the purpose of education, the roles of actors within the system, and systemic changes at different structural levels.

The energy and effort needed by schools to implement a Type 1 policy are considerably less than that of a Type 2 policy. A Type 2 policy deals with the challenges of individual capacity to change, addition to the challenges of team members working together to find a common and/or shared perspective on the need, nature and interest of the reform policy. The policy challenges are therefore cumulative, meaning that they do not increase gradually in difficulty but rather substantially, as attempted by the ratios indicated in Figure 8 (1:4:9:16:25). These ratios are not an exact quantitative value, but rather a mechanism to display the differences and complexities for conceptual and illustrative purposes. A Type 1 policy is therefore twenty-five times (these are conceptual numbers and not mathematical numbers) more difficult to implement than a Type 5 policy.

Figure 8: The increase in complexity of 5 types of reform policies



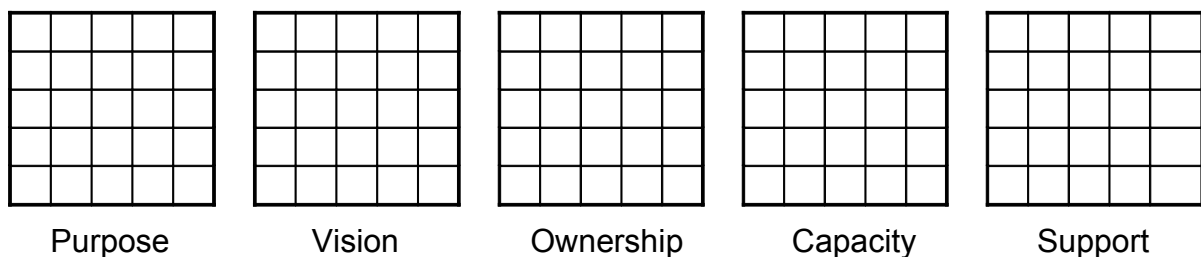
The purpose of this graphic display of the different types of reform policies is to show that 'reform policies' do not mean the same thing to different people. These different types of reform policies are currently implemented in different countries and schools. The reference to 'reform policy' often mentioned in the policy implementation literature should be more specific since different types of reform policies present different implementation challenges to schools.

### 3.2.2.2 *Necessary conditions for successful reform implementation*

The second dimension of this concept focuses on the readiness conditions prevailing at different schools. As indicated, this study will use the five labels of Schwahn and Spady's (1998) research, taken from over a hundred literature sources. These labels include the desire for those responsible for implementing the change policy, to have (1) a clear and compelling Purpose for the change; (2) a concrete and inspiring Vision of the change in ideal form; (3) strong Ownership for the change among those affected by it; (4) broad Capacity for implementing the change; and (5) tangible organisational Support for making the change happen.

Schwahn and Spady's research indicates that policies often do not take into account the context where policies need to be implemented, especially in relation to the human commitment and institutional support needed. These policies therefore have little hope of succeeding if these key commitment and support conditions are not present in schools. I argue that both the human commitment (will to change – purpose, vision and ownership) and institutional support (capacity to change – capacity and support) will impact on the quality of Operational Implementation (Figure 9).

Figure 9: The five necessary conditions to implement policies successfully



Therefore, when attempts are made to implement a reform policy in schools without establishing these five conditions, these attempts are actually not testing the policy's

implementation potential but are instead actually undermining the policy's possible success. Without these conditions, the policy, the abovementioned researchers argue, does not have a chance of being successful. Policy makers therefore may be alienating those schools who are in need of these conditions, rather than assisting them to establish these conditions within their schools. Although Schwahn and Spady (1998), Joyner (2000) and McLaughlin (1998) discuss these conditions only in relation to the Operational Implementation stage, and Senge et. al. (2004) and Fullan (1985) in terms of individual and leadership capacity to deal with change, this study will further combine these conditions with the three different types of school functionality under discussion in the next section. In essence, I argue that the amount of support for these five elements will vary among the three different functionality levels of school; meaning, that high functioning schools will need less support in these five elements than will non-functioning schools.

### 3.2.2.3 *Level of school functionality*

The third dimension of the IRC framework focuses on the context of schooling and the vast disparities existing among schools in general and in South African schools in particular as indicated by Sayed (2001). Knowing the level of functionality of the school could therefore assist policy makers, Intervention Support agents and those responsible for facilitating policy implementation at school level in understanding and responding to the readiness of schools to implement a given policy as well as the amount of support and resources needed by those schools.

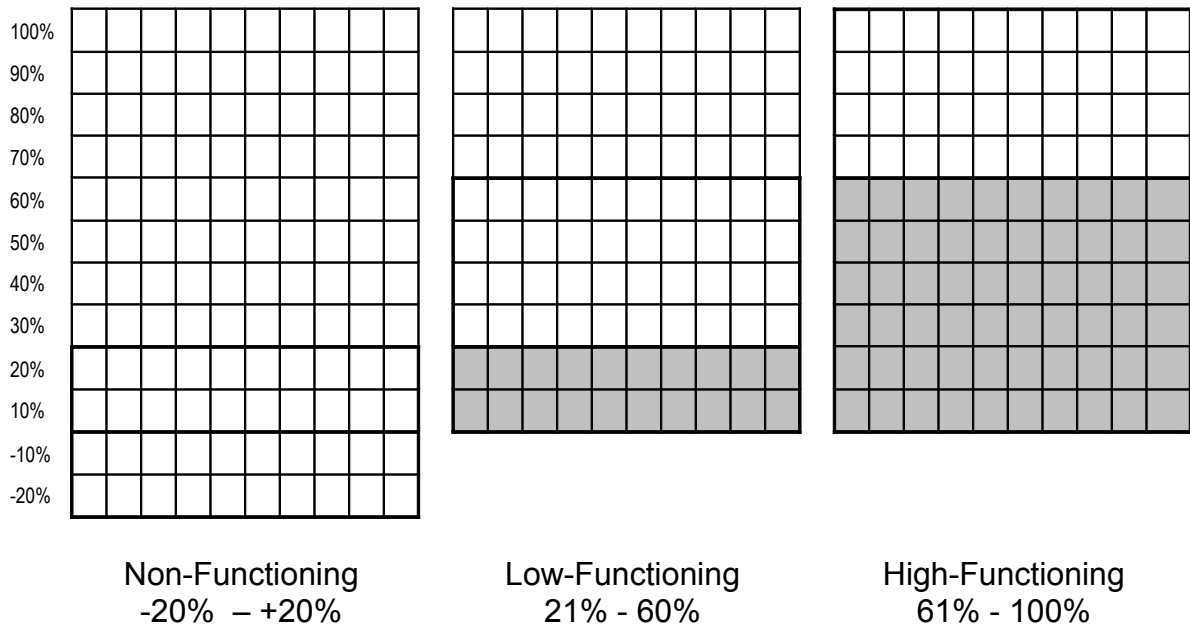
After scanning the literature on the PPG, 'School Effectiveness Research' (SER) and the 'School Improvement Research' (SIR), and eliminating the 'learner performance' items, the literature debate focuses on ten areas (see Table 3). These ten areas are identified as the necessary capacity and skills (functionality levels) that must be present for school to respond to reform policy challenges. However, within the 'school functionality' debate in this study, no distinction is made between the types of school (public or independent) or the different stages of schools (primary – reception year, foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase; secondary – senior phase and further education and training phase).

Table 3: Example of characteristics of three levels of school functionality

	Level 3 High Functioning School Professional Orientation Achieving the characteristics at an average of between <b>61%</b> and <b>100%</b>	Level 2 Low Functioning School Bureaucratic Orientation Achieving the characteristics at an average of between <b>21%</b> and <b>60%</b>	Level 1 Non-Functioning School Dysfunctional Orientation Achieving characteristics at an average of between <b>-20%</b> and <b>+20%</b>
1. School Ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear purpose, common beliefs and values, and consistent direction exist among teachers, learners and parents about core responsibility and why they are at school.</li> </ul>		
2. Vision, Aims and Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everybody understands the shared vision and their role in achieving the vision, which is accompanied by high standards and expectations.</li> <li>Teachers and staff believe that all learners can learn and meet high expectations through ambitious and rigorous course of study.</li> <li>Planned and actual curricula are achieved through researched based teaching strategies and materials to overcome obstacles.</li> </ul>		
3. Role of Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective professional, instructional and administrative leadership is present.</li> <li>Leadership is proactive and seek help that is needed to implement reform.</li> <li>Leadership natures instructional programme and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth.</li> <li>Teachers and other staff, including district officials, have leadership roles.</li> </ul>		
4. Role of Principal and SMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership allows work within a team, where members in the team own and support the decision making process.</li> <li>Collective decision making does not blur clearly defined individual roles and responsibilities among staff.</li> <li>The collective leadership is highly visible, especially for supporting teachers.</li> </ul>		
5. Structures, Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear organisational structures exist, with roles and responsibilities of staff not exclusively defined and assigned according to traditions.</li> <li>Systems and structures are in place to monitor and review learner assessment to identify learners who need help, and more support and instruction time is provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to these learners.</li> <li>Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of learner progress and needs.</li> </ul>		
6. Decision Making and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purposeful staff meetings are used to discuss and make decisions on major issues.</li> <li>Teachers feel well-informed.</li> <li>Communication is frequent, direct and open between staff and management, and it operates in both up and down direction.</li> </ul>		
7. Professional Working Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everybody is involved and connected to each other to identify problems and solutions.</li> <li>A strong emphasis is placed on training and developing staff in areas of most need.</li> <li>Feedback from learning and teaching focuses on extensive and ongoing professional development, to achieve school or district vision and objectives.</li> </ul>		
8. Link with Parents and the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a sense that everybody has a responsibility to educate learners, not just the teachers and staff at school.</li> <li>Parents, businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/ universities all play a vital role in educating learners.</li> <li>Those who support the learning process are made to feel welcome in the school.</li> </ul>		
9. SGB and DoE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a positive and harmonious relationship between teachers, the SGB and DoE.</li> <li>SGB members are informed about the internal workings of the school.</li> <li>Members of the DoE play a significant role in school management.</li> </ul>		
10. Managing Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no degree of professional scepticism about changes within education.</li> <li>Resources are allocated to support full implementation of all innovations or developments, and therefore non are left 'up-in-the-air'.</li> </ul>		

To give more clarity to this argument, let us conceptually assume three levels of school functionality, ranging from Level 1 - 3. Within this range, Level 3 schools are defined as institutions where decisions are made based of 'professional' discussions, driven by educational principles. Decisions are made in the best interests of the profession and education in general, and not because they benefit particular groups at school. Percentage-wise, these schools function at levels ranging from 61% to 100%. On the other hand, Level 2 schools are institutions making decisions based on 'bureaucratic' discussion, which are driven by policies, rules and regulations. At these schools, teachers are willing to do things because the policy instructs them to do so, and not because it is in the best interests of education. Even if what they are asked to do make sense, but the policy is not explicit that they must do it, it would not be done. Percentages-wise, these schools function at levels ranging from 21% to 60%. Finally, Level 1 schools vary in capacity with regards to the essentials of education, but at these schools more than half of the activities that teachers engage in have nothing to do with the essence of education – the facilitation of teaching and learning. At these schools, teachers are constantly distracted by things unrelated to education like social problems, gang fights, discipline problems, and issues related to personal interests and benefits. Teachers at these schools have multiple visions of why learners attend school and what they need to contribute. Some teachers will believe that empowering learners with skills to survive within their tough communities might be sometimes more important than what would be defined by other colleagues as 'education', and the achievement of academic results. The lack of a common vision will fuel tension, mistrust and sometimes outright disrespect for each other's position or opinion about education. They often focus on individual or group survival. As an example, the level of stress and despondency among them is very high, and therefore they need each other's support and protection when one of them is absent or leaves the school for the purposes that are either educational or personal. Decisions are made in the school based on allegiance and group affiliation rather than on what is in the best interest of education. Percentage-wise, these schools function at levels ranging from negative 20% to positive 20%. Schools, who find themselves within the 'negative zone' of functionality, are effectively harmful to learners and should be closed down (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Three levels of school functionality in relation to the support needed by schools



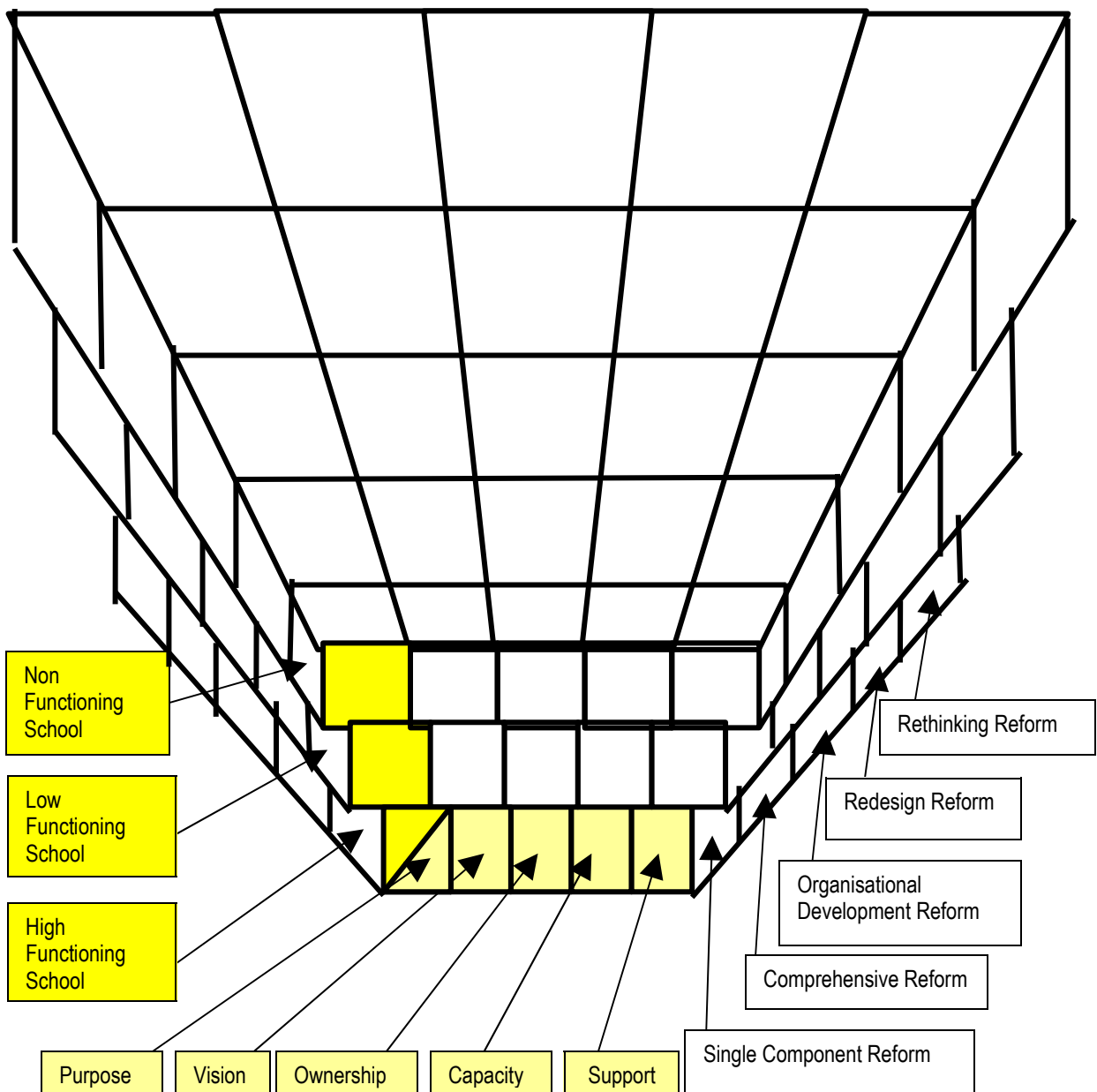
The concept of ‘high, low and non-functioning schools’ is used to clarify conceptual arguments within this study about the different levels of school functionality. The precise quantification of the different margins of percentage between these three functionality levels, or the possibility of different terminology, is therefore not at the core of this study. Instead, these concepts will be used as tools to explain the conceptual arguments within this study. The concept of a ‘high, low and non-functioning school’, is not based on the level of academic performance of learners, or the quantity of resources (especially material) available at school, but on the quality of organisational capacity available to perform effective change management functions.

The characteristics and levels of school functionality are not used in the study to label these schools, but rather to indicate that policy cannot be formulated based on a one-size-fits-all approach since schools are not the same. Different schools need different kinds of support and different solutions, unique to their particular problems and challenges.

Eventually, when the three dimensions are put together within one display, they construct the **Implementation Readiness Conditions** framework (see the three-

dimensional display in Figure 11). Although a presentation as captured within Figure 11 will never fairly represent the challenges of this three-dimensional display, it is intended to show that the greater the complexity of the policy, and the lower the functionality of the school, the more intense the support needs to be to assist the school in implementing the reform policy. And in some instances, policy makers must declare which schools will be ready to implement their policy, and furthermore, what needs to be done to assist others who are ‘not yet ready’ to implement the policy.

Figure 11: The Implementation Readiness Conditions (IRC) framework



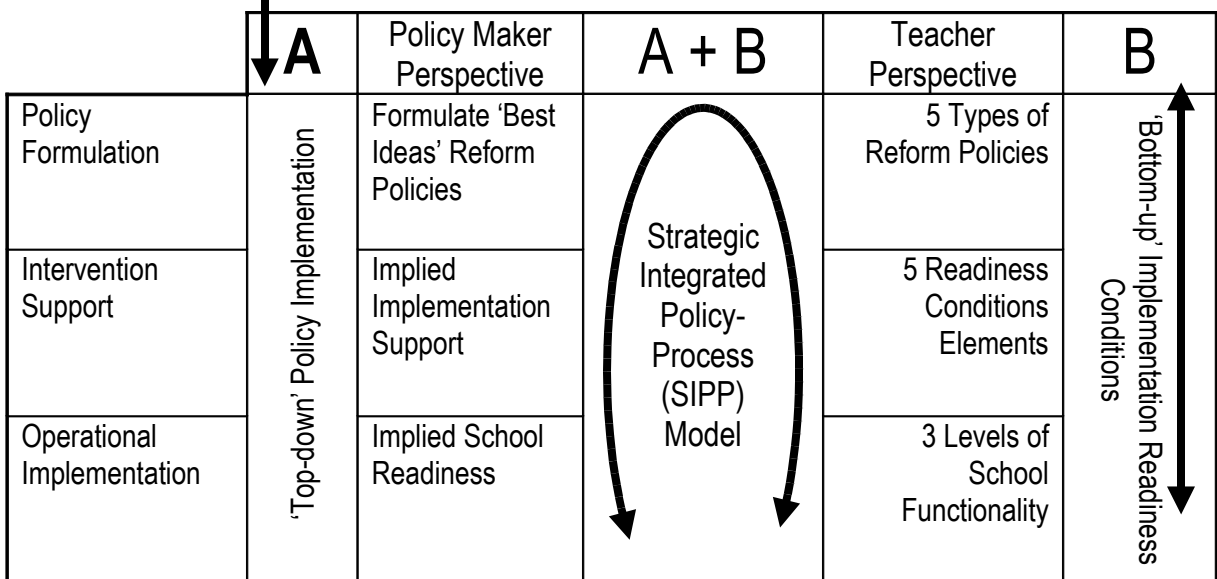


### 3.2.3. Constructing the Strategic Integrated Policy-Process (SIPP) model of policy making in South Africa

The final component to the conceptual framework is the incorporation of the IRC framework into the current ‘disconnected’, top-down approach to policy making in education. The IRC framework adds the ‘bottom-up’ approach to this current policy-process. The combination of the ‘bottom-up’ and the ‘top-down’ approaches will be termed in this study the Strategic Integrated Policy-process (SIPP) model.

The three IRC framework components form the ‘first leg’ of the ‘bottom-up’ process of Policy Formulation. This will allow policy makers to make informed decisions (data-driven decision making) about (1) the depth of change that is needed at different schools; (2) the level of complexity of the reform policy/ instrument; and (3) the Intervention Support, development and mediation needed to implement the reform policy. The ‘second leg’ will be the current ‘top-down’ process of Policy Formulation. Together, these two processes make up an approach to policy making which this study calls the Strategic Integrated Policy-process approach (see Figure 12). This approach starts off with understanding the nature and functionality of the school and ends up with the Operational Implementation of the policy at school level. Knowledge of the school is therefore at the centre of this school-based policy-process.

Figure 12: Strategic Integrated (A + B) vs Disconnected (A) policy-process model



### 3.3 The key conceptual argument of the study

The key challenge of policy reform as argued in this study is when the inappropriate policy strategies are applied to the inappropriate school settings. For example, when a systemic-reform-policy approach (Type 4 and 5) is applied to a ‘non-functioning’ school (Level 1), it is by definition doomed to fail, and the attempt drains the energy and enthusiasm of all concerned, not least the policy makers and teachers. A systemic change (Type 4) is too far out of the reach of non-functioning schools to be implemented (see Table 4). Even the two other school reform policies (comprehensive and organisational development change) are too challenging for non-functioning schools.

Table 4: Percentage of policy difficulty in different types of schools

Different Types of Reform		High Functioning School	Low Functioning School	Non Functioning School
Type 1. Single Component	School Change	Easy	Possible	Difficult
Type 2. Comprehensive		Manageable	Challenging	
Type 3. Organisational Development		Possible	Difficult	
Type 4. Redesign	Systemic Change	Challenging		
Type 5. Rethinking		Difficult		

The most challenging policies for low-functioning schools are the groups of ‘school change’, which include the single component, comprehensive and organisational development reform policies. Even ‘systemic change’ policies are too difficult for low-functioning schools to handle. It is only the high-functioning schools that are able to implement systemic change policies, which include redesign and rethinking reform policies. As schools develop the ability to deal with a lower type of reform policy, it gets easier for them to deal with such policies in future, and the next type of policy.

### **3.4 A summary of the chapter**

The arguments within this chapter centres on a new phase within the ‘policy-practice gap’ debate, which in South Africa is led by the current Minister of Education. In essence, her argument is not about the production of new reform policies, but rather to focuses on strategies and solutions to implement the existing policies on the statute books. Therefore, getting the implementation strategies and other systems in support of Operational Implementation right is of utmost importance for the Minister.

In support of this new focus, this chapter proposes a conceptual understanding of the different levels of school functionality, the need for creating the condition elements that support successful policy implementation, as well as matching up the correct type of reform policy with the known capacity and need of the schools. More specifically, the focus of this chapter is therefore to argue that it is time to become more sophisticated and selective about how reform policies are applied to schools with different stages of readiness to change. It is argued that policy makers and departmental officials can develop the capacity, skills and data on how to identify the different needs of schools and provide for these needs, so that the efforts of dedicated and committed change agents are exerted where they will do the greatest good for children.

The next chapter will focus on the research methodology of this study.