

CHAPTER THREE

Towards a Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Relationship between Policy and Practice

“Our own tendency as policy advisors and policy makers is to overshoot noble goals with too many simultaneously announced rapid fire policy changes, and to forget about how to implement these”¹

In the previous chapter I reviewed the literature on educational change in order to provide the conceptual platform to build the theoretical framework for this study that addresses three policy-specific questions regarding teacher understandings and beliefs with regard to the assessment policy; how teachers practice assessment in their classrooms; and how the continuities and the discontinuities between official policy on assessment and teachers’ assessment practices could be explained.

In this chapter I describe and discuss the conceptual framework that enabled me to examine and explain the continuities and the discontinuities between official policy on assessment and teachers’ assessment practices. I draw on the construct of ‘deep change’ articulated by Fullan (1993; 1999b, 2001; 2003) to develop the framework that I refer to as a ‘Deep Change Framework’. This framework is directed towards constructing a different understanding of the relationship between educational policy and classroom practice within the context of educational reform in a transitional democracy. This framework is premised on the notion that the optimisation of outcomes of the policy process is facilitated by a deep understanding of that process. If policymakers wish to facilitate the implementation of policy by teachers they must understand the process by which teachers implement/do not implement policy and the conditions that support or hinder the process. This framework adopts such a process orientation; it views change as deep, non-linear, complex and dynamic; and recognises the simultaneity of top-down (policy) and bottom up (teacher) change initiatives. This deep change perspective offers a different strategy for analysing and

¹ Quotation from a paper delivered at the International Conference on Emerging democracies, citizenship and human rights education in Netherlands by Dr I Rensburg, then Deputy Director-General of Education of South Africa, 18-21 June 2000.

understanding the tenuous relationship between policy and practice. As Dewey (1960: 102) put it:

A standpoint which is nowhere in particular and from which things are not seen at a special angle is an absurdity. But one may have affection for a standpoint which gives a rich and ordered landscape rather than for one from which things are seen confusedly and meagrely.

I therefore use the deep change framework as a perspective that is not only rich and ordered, but also provides the conceptual tools necessary to understand anew the continuities and discontinuities between official policy on assessment and teachers' assessment practices. This perspective does not critique, dismiss or denigrate other perspectives or explanations, but adds new insights to the policy-practice dilemma in education change settings.

DEEP CHANGE

All change is not the same. Yet policy reformers assume that new educational goals will alter teacher behaviours and beliefs in ways that lead to uniform, meaningful and sustained changes in teaching and learning. Change, however, can be nonexistent, that is no real change in the desired direction (Fullan, 1991, 2001); and change can be superficial (Fullan, 1991; McREL, 2000) with alterations only in the surface features of teacher behaviour without understanding the principles of and rationale for the change. Change can also be temporary or unsustainable (Fullan, 2001), without the long-term changes in teacher behaviours that extend beyond the life of a particular reform. Change can be mechanical, with teachers going through the routines of change but without understanding or committing to the deeper value-orientations and belief systems that underpin a new reform. Change can be incremental (Quinn, 1996), with small steps in the change processes that can be described as evolutionary rather than sweeping, transformative changes in teaching and learning signalled in ambitious policies of societies undergoing radical change. In other words, the fact that policy reforms induce change is less interesting than searching questions about the depth, meaning, nature and sustainability of such changes among teachers. It is this set of concerns that inspired me to employ what the literature calls 'deep change' as a conceptual framework within which to measure and explain the qualities of change

among teachers exposed to a comprehensive new policy on assessment reform in South Africa.

What is “deep change”?

Fullan (1991) notes that deep change involves constructing deep, sophisticated meaning of the change in terms of what the change is, the purpose of the change and how the change process proceeds. It involves a fundamental shift of mind in thinking about change (Fullan, 1999b). Deep change involves altering the underlying assumptions, goals, philosophy or belief, skills, conceptions and behaviour regarding teaching and learning, including assessment – a change in culture (Fullan, 1991; 1993). Deep change involves teachers seeking the best knowledge and ideas in order to go deeper into helping their students construct new meanings, solve problems, work in diverse groups, and be proactive learners in a complex changing world (Fullan, 1999b). It implies taking risks and living with uncertainty (*ibid*). Deep change means that teachers see themselves as active agents of change (change agency) rather than victims of change complying uncritically with policy reforms (Fullan, 1993). This means:

[Each] and every teacher has the responsibility to help create an organization capable of individual and collective enquiry and continuous renewal, or it will not happen...It is only by individuals taking action to alter their own environment that there is any chance for deep change.

(p39-40; emphasis added)

For deep change, Fullan (2003:5) argues:

[We] need the creative energies and ownership of the teaching force and its leaders. Hence the current emphasis on “informed professional judgment”.

He adds that the vast majority of people in the system should end up owning the problem and be agents of its solutions. This does not mean that the problem should be handed over to the people, but that conditions and processes should be created that will enhance the possibility of greater ownership and commitment (*ibid*). These conditions should be balanced between chaos and order because too much chaos is harmful and too much order could lead to fear, resistance or even passive dependency (*ibid*).

The core capacities of change agency are personal vision, mastery, inquiry and collaboration and are essential to live in a state of continuous imbalance created by surprising and unplanned change forces (Fullan, 2003: 102). Deep change agency will mean that teachers develop rapport between top-down and bottom-up strategies because top-down and bottom-up forces co-exist and feed on each other (p4). Teachers will realise that they need the top and the top needs them in a “different two-way relationship of pressure, support and continuous negotiation” (p38). For example, teachers should appreciate that policies on assessment could and should serve both the accountability function of making everyone aware of how well students are doing, and the implementation function of developing strategies to make improvements in teaching and learning based on the results. In other words deep change involves teachers acquiring new skills, capacity, behaviour, commitment, motivation, beliefs and understandings in relation to the reformed policy. Fullan (1993:23) observes:

It is no denial of the potential worth of particular innovations to observe that unless deeper change in thinking and skills occur there will be limited impact. ...[The] main problem in public education is not resistant to change, but the presence of too many innovations or adopted uncritically and superficially on an ad hoc fragmented basis.

(emphasis added)

Stacey (1996), in Fullan (1999b: 68), supports this view and argues:

People who begin to think differently will almost certainly begin to act differently, and they will then almost certainly affect someone else who will begin to behave differently.

However, we are cautioned that people cannot be forced to change, coerced to think differently or to develop new skills, but that they need to be provided with the appropriate conditions that enable them to “consider personal and shared visions, and skill development through practice over time” (ibid). Teachers cannot have an impact in the classroom unless they also have an impact on altering the working conditions surrounding the classroom (ibid).

Deep change means teachers guided by moral purpose in complex times of change; that is, pursuing improvements designed to make a difference in the lives of students, even though it is enormously complex and difficult (Fullan, 1993, 1999b, 2001,

2003). Achieving moral purpose means developing mutual empathy and relationships across diverse groups, a difficult but necessary task (Fullan, 1999b). Moral purpose also means pursuing equity in teaching, learning and assessment:

We find that when reforms seek to achieve parity in opportunity and achievement across diverse groups of students, reformers faced enormous challenges.

Oakes *et al.* (1998), in Fullan (1999b: 2)

Moral purpose, at the macro-level, can be described as education's contribution to societal development and democracy (*ibid*). Moral purpose combined with change agency synergises care and competence, equity and excellence (Fullan, 1993). But:

In the teaching profession these two facets of educational development have not come together. When teachers work on personal vision- building and see how their commitment to making a difference in the classroom is connected to the wider purpose of education, it gives practical and moral meaning to their profession.

(p145)

Deep change involves collaboration, collaborations formed inside and outside the school (Fullan, 1999b). Collaboration means forming quality collegial relationships, making connections, and seeing and valuing inter-relationships. This is especially important in education where educational problems are so complex that they require the mobilization of a collective force working insightfully on the solutions and committing themselves to concentrated action together. It was found that schools that worked collaboratively did better than those schools where isolation and privatism prevailed (Fullan, 1993). A useful caveat follows, that is, individualism is not bad.

The capacity to think and work independently is essential to educational reform. Herein is a paradox, namely the tension between collaboration and individualism. However, policy makers are advised to honour both individualism and collegiality simultaneously, and to allow the creative tension between individualism and collegiality to prevail (p36). In extreme cases collaboration could lead to 'group think' meaning "uncritical conformity to the group, unthinking acceptance of the latest solution, suppression of individual dissent" (p34). Collaboration means forming professional learning communities (*ibid*). It was found that student performance was high in schools that had a strong professional learning community (*ibid*). Professional

learning communities generate greater learning (*ibid*). Collaboration means aligning and integrating new ideas with ideas that are already working to achieve greater dynamic coherence (*ibid*). In collaborative schools teachers spontaneously self organise to share and assess new ideas (*ibid*). ‘Communities of practice’ is another term used to illustrate the power of groups in achieving deep change:

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis...

(Wenger, et al., 2002, in Fullan, 2003:45)

Deep change also involves forming collaborative relationships with the communities outside the schools such as the parents, surrounding community, business, the district and state level authorities (Fullan, 1999b; 2003). This collaboration both inside and outside the school requires deep assertive planning to obtain substantial results (*ibid*). This essentially means that quality relationships developed could inspire willingness to invest in extra sacrifices and effort, and loyalty to the profession – resources beyond money to achieve deep change. This collaborative context allows for a “culture of knowledge sharing” where people are interacting; new knowledge is being produced in the heads of people; new solutions are being discovered; people own these solutions in the sense that they are passionately committed and energetic about pursuing them; and there are questioning and critical people so as to avoid locking into weak solutions and to continually seek potentially better ideas – critical sharing for deep change (Fullan, 2003:47).

Deep change seeks the fusion of the intellectual, political and spiritual forces of change (*ibid*). The intellectual force is about schools creating knowledge using the world of ideas about learning (*ibid*). The political component involves establishing alliances among diverse groups inside and outside the school in order to mobilize power to achieve educational goals (*ibid*). The spiritual force or moral dimension is the commitment to make a difference in the lives of all students (*ibid*). The fusion of these three forces not only reinforces each other but “*produces five times the energy – the kind of energy that is essential for self-organising breakthroughs in complex systems*” (p82, emphasis in original). Fusion depends on engaging the public in the debate about ideas, power and purpose (*ibid*). In essence deep change according to

this perspective means developing the cognitive, moral and affective powers, and seeing their relationships as mutually reinforcing to bring about deep change. It means bringing about deep educational change with both mind and heart, and not just routine or technical behaviours.

Deep change is achieved when the theory of education and the theory of change (or action) are simultaneously strong (Fullan, 1999b; 2003). Fullan (2003:53) argues: *[You] cannot go deeply unless you create powerful new synergies between these two theories.* The relationship between the theory of education and theory of change is illustrated in the figure below:

		Theory of Education	
		Weak	Strong
Theory of Change	Weak	Drift	Superficial Change
	Strong	Change for the sake of change	Deep change

Figure 1: Theory of education and theory of change
(Adapted from Fullan, 2003: 53)

Fullan (1999b) further proposes that reforms be examined in terms of their theories of education and their theories of change or action (p.20). A theory of education includes the substance of content, the pedagogy, including moral purpose and knowledge, the pedagogical assumptions and associated components essential to the reform (Fullan, 1999b; 2003). The theory of change or action concerns what strategies are formed to guide and support successful implementation (ibid). The distinction between the theory of education and the theory of change is slippery and not absolutely pure, but it is useful in developing a sophisticated understanding of deep change. One of the complex change lessons is that theories of education and theories of change need each other (Fullan, 1999b). But the two theories can coexist independently of each other or one can be seriously underdeveloped at the expense of another (Fullan, 2003). Many

reformers are surprised when their initiatives encompassing well-developed theories of education are ignored or misused in practice (Fullan, 1999b). The explanation for the failure is ascribed to the absence of a theory of change or action. For example, the problem with progressive reformers who used Dewey's progressive pedagogy was:

[Their] theory of education in the absence of a theory of action drove them down a path of self-destruction.

(Fullan, 1999b:67)

Fullan (p51) refers to reformers with flawed theories of action as having *faulty maps of change*, and ascribes these faulty maps of change for non-implementation of policy ideas.

Most reform initiatives have a theory of education at best, and rarely have a theory of action to address local context, culture or condition. Theories of change must focus on context because:

Local context (readiness to learn, local capacity, etc.) is a crucial variable, and no program can expect to spread successfully if it does not take into account the variable contexts which it will inevitably encounter.

(p21)

With reference to seven reform strategies, namely standards, teacher development, new school designs, decentralization and site-based management, charter schools, school contracting and vouchers Fullan (1999b:71) argues:

In my terms, these reform strategies contain elements of a theory of education but lack comprehensive theories of action needed to address related conditions, which would have to be altered in order for success to occur.

The large-scale curriculum development projects of the 1950s and 1960s, also, while strong on ideas almost totally neglected the culture of the institutions that were to host the innovations (ibid). The implication is that deep change means changing the context, which is difficult but possible. Changed context can result in new behaviours, but the new contexts need to be dramatically different to stimulate new behaviours (Fullan, 2003).

But the problem is extremely complex; even with a well-developed theory of action, reform initiatives face incredible difficulties pertaining to tacit knowledge, local

prehistory, local politics and personalities (ibid). It is equally important to make explicit the theory of change guiding a program of change (ibid). In examining four programmes with compatible theories of education, it was found that each had different theories of action that led to conflicts around dilemmas of schooling. Different approaches to handling the dilemmas made it difficult to make action decisions to carry out the collaborative work demanded by the projects (ibid). The author concludes:

Rather than trying to forge a single, common theory of action, those involved in reform efforts might be better off trying to gain a deep, respectful understanding of when and why they are likely to disagree.

(Hatch, 1998 in Fullan, 1999b:21)

Perhaps the theory of change should be guided by the science of complexity or complexity theory that essentially claims:

[That] the link between cause and effect is difficult to trace, that changes (planned and other wise) unfolds in non-linear ways, that paradoxes and contradictions abound and that creative solutions arise out of interaction under conditions of uncertainty, diversity and instability.

(Fullan, 1999b:4)

The theory of action should factor in the pedagogical and experiential gaps between different teachers and the contextual gaps between different schools. It should aim at overcoming the obstacles and disadvantages to teachers' pedagogical achievement by considering more sophisticated strategies. This could give deeper meaning to the moral question of change by reducing if not closing the educational gaps between disadvantaged teachers (who are more likely to teach in under-resourced and/or rural schools) and advantaged teachers (who are more likely to teach in well-resourced and/or suburban schools) given the different starting points of different teachers. The strategy must include capacity building as a route to individual and social development.

The theory of change/action should view schools as "living systems" (Fullan, 1999b:13), which means being sensitive to the people within the school and developing relationships with the external environment. The success of living systems is that they consist of intricate, embedded interaction inside and outside the

organization, which converts tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge on an ongoing basis (ibid). The conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge is a meaning-making process because it brings knowledge out into the open to be shared (ibid).

Knowledge creation is crucial:

The sharing of tacit knowledge among multiple individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and motivations becomes the critical step for organizational knowledge creation to take place. The individuals' emotions, feelings, and mental models have to be shared to build mutual trust.

(Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995 in Fullan, 1999b:16)

This 'living system' orientation towards schools may likely address the criticism that "schools are more a conservative agency for the status quo rather than a revolutionary force for transformation" (p10).

A word of caution is instructive: "there never will be a definitive theory of change" that will be applicable to all situations because each situation is unique with its own history and makeup that would cause unpredictable differences to emerge (p10). It is equally important to note that rationally constructed reform strategies do not work because they are inappropriate in the face of rapidly changing environments that self-generate complex dynamics over and over again. Fullan (21) advises:

[It] is the task of change theorists and practitioners to accumulate their wisdom and experiences about how the change process works.

Quinn (1996) describes deep change as making personal choices and commitments as well as taking personal responsibility to disrupt the *status quo*, which most organisations naturally tend towards. He adds that deep change requires new ways of thinking and behaving, it is major in scope, is discontinuous with the past and is generally irreversible, it distorts existing patterns of action and involves risk taking, it is much more difficult and it demands a great deal from those who are in the system. It is unsettling and it requires people to call forth and learn new ways of interacting with problems and with the environment. In other words reform efforts requiring deep change means shaking up the system inside out (*ibid*). This view of deep change differs from Fullan (described above) in that it is more dramatic and exaggerated. But for radical change to take place, maybe this is what is needed. The question is which concept of deep change works best under what conditions?

My understanding from the literature is that deep change involves deep and consequential change in classroom practice by teachers and when teachers make major paradigm shifts in their epistemology, values, beliefs, attitudes, skills and behaviour to realize the transformative goals of the reformed policy. My understanding seems to resonate with the definition of deep change provided by Coburn (2003: 4):

By “deep change,” I mean change that goes beyond the surface structures or procedures (such as changes in materials, classroom organizations, or the addition of specific activities) to alter teachers’ beliefs, norms of social interaction, and pedagogical principles as enacted in the curriculum.

But achieving this kind of change is a complex endeavour and an enormous challenge for teachers, the difficulty of which was reported in the findings of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005, that teachers lacked the deep understandings of Curriculum 2005 and struggled with issues on assessment (Chisholm, 2000). Other examples also reveal the lack of deep change in teacher’s classroom practices compared to reform policy expectations (see Coburn, 2003; Cohen, 1990; Ball, 1990; Fullan, 1993, 1999b, 2003). I agree that it would be more challenging for teachers to make deep changes in practice the further the new practice is from existing practices (Cohen and Ball, 2000, in Coburn, 2003). The literature also posits that for teachers to change deeply, a strong theory of education and a strong theory of change necessary (Fullan, 2003). Defining deep change matters for it influences both the ways policymakers craft reform strategies and the way researchers study the problem of depth. Knowing what deep change is leads to the question of why deep change is important.

Why is deep change important in education reform?

Dramatic social, political, economic and technological changes create new complex goals for education and adaptive challenges to teachers requiring them to change their practices at a deep level to respond to these challenges. Adaptive challenges are often systemic problems with no ready answers to respond to the dilemmas. The new assessment policy is an example of a response to the adaptive challenges of significant social and political changes coupled with increasing attention to student

performance by society. The adaptive challenges require schools to change the way they operate in order to thrive in an environment that differs from the past (McREL, 2000: 4). This new environment challenges deeply held beliefs, question past values that were accepted and poses competing but legitimate perspectives. Deep change is also essential to serve the moral purpose of education (Fullan, 1999b). The moral purpose of education includes engaging in improvements designed to make a difference to the lives of all students, especially the disadvantaged ones, enabling them to be productive citizens in our increasingly complex and dynamic society (Fullan, 1999b: 4). Deep change is required to develop human capital, which is, making a difference to the lives of individual students, and linking this to the development of social capital, that is, making a difference in all students for the larger social good (Fullan, 1991; Merchant, 1995). Deep change is important to convert organisations into learning organisations so that their traditional beliefs and practices do not become calcified and resistant to change but enabling them to radically modify their values and behaviour to reflect new knowledge, skills, conceptions, values, and insights. Deep change is important for a greater understanding of the big picture of change and for more meaningful teacher change.

What are the strengths of deep change?

Deep change enables teachers to make a radical break from past policies and practices that were educationally, politically, economically and morally inappropriate, if not damaging, for human development and growth. For example, in South Africa, the debilitating effects of our past apartheid policies and practices on the majority of our people are well documented and well known. It is unquestionable that the world is changing at a phenomenal rate, and this creates enormous pressure for us to change in ways that are deep in order to respond to the challenging, complex, dynamic, uncertain world. Engaging in deep change creates conditions for the development of critical and problem-solving skills. Teachers would no longer be uncritical implementers of policy. Students will also be given the opportunities to change in deep and meaningful ways. High quality, substantive and sustained change will be possible by deep change. Deep change most probably would enable us to move to “New horizon 2”, the kind of deep reforms needed in the twenty first century (Fullan, 2003:3).

What are the limitations of deep change?

One major weakness is the assumptions about teacher learning and change. There is an assumption that if teachers have a deep understanding of the change and find the change meaningful, they will change their classroom practice accordingly. What if they do understand and have developed a deep meaning of the change but decide not to practice the change because of the extra effort, energy and time required to implement change? What if there are no incentives and sanctions accompanying and sustaining teachers' deep change efforts? Would that mean that teachers lack the commitment to practice deep change? There is also the assumption that teachers have the capacity to make deep changes. Under what conditions would teachers make deep change in teaching and learning? How do multiple realities of teachers' lives impact on their willingness and capacity to change deeply? Another weakness is related to how to get teachers to change deeply. It needs to be acknowledged that teachers have their own personal ideologies, preferences, values, knowledge, beliefs, and practices about assessment, teaching and learning that they have developed and internalised during the course of their development as students and as teachers. This tenacity of their established traditions will inevitably influence the nature and extent of changes in their practice. They cannot be told or coerced into making deep changes. Making deep change is unlike removing old clothes and putting on new ones, Far from that. Teachers have to struggle through ambivalence and ambiguities to develop deep change over time. Underlying assumptions, values, beliefs, perceptions and behaviors cannot be changed by policy directives, but can be cultivated, nurtured and encouraged by the creation and sustaining of conditions that allow teachers the opportunities to make such deep changes (Day, 1999). Those conditions have yet to be developed and examples of deep change are yet to appear (Fullan, 2003). Deep change demand more effort, and failure of deep change will take a greater toll on the educational enterprise.

Arising from the survey of the literature on change and in particular, the literature on *deep change*, as well as the conceptual framework discussed above, I make three key propositions about deep change, which I discuss below.

Key propositions about deep change

I describe these propositions as tentative and “fuzzy” (Bassegy, 1999: 13). These propositions are informed by my experience as a classroom teacher, teacher educator and education policy maker. The propositions I make must be seen as theoretical concepts to be tested in this study; they are tentative and open for others to follow up and test their trustworthiness. They are tentative statements rather than absolute claims on knowledge. The three key propositions are as follows:

Proposition One:

Teachers may not have a deep, sophisticated understanding of a new assessment policy even if there is evidence of strong rhetorical commitment to the policy

There must be a dynamic synergy of what teachers do and the meaning or purpose they ascribe to it. Inherent in the purpose or meaning is the pedagogical belief in the change. The purpose of the specific change, which is the change in the assessment policy, must be located within the larger goal of the country’s reconstruction and development agenda, including curriculum change. In other words teachers need to have a deep sophisticated understanding of the new assessment policy. The crux of change is developing deep meaning in relation to the new reform:

The problem for implementation then, is not only teachers “learning how to do it,” but teachers learning the theoretical project ... absent knowledge about why they are doing what they’re doing; implementation will be superficial only, and teachers will lack the understanding they will need to deepen their practice or to sustain new practices in the face of changing context.

(McLaughlin and Mitra, 2000 in Fullan, 2001: 45, emphasis in original).

My proposition is that teachers may not have this deep sophisticated understanding of the assessment policy, but rather a superficial understanding of the new assessment policy. Fullan (2001) who noted that teachers often make classroom decisions based on pragmatic trial-and error grounds rather than thinking through the rationale and principles of the change supports this proposition. He adds that superficial adoption must be replaced with deep meaning (Fullan, 2001). Oakes and his associates (Oakes, et al., 1999) also observed that teachers often rush to adopt new initiatives without

considering their deeper meanings and purposes. Similarly, McLaughlin and Mitra (2001) concluded that for the achievement of deep reform teachers needed to know why they were doing what they did to prevent superficial implementation. Therefore in this study I do not assume that the teachers understand the policy's intended message, in other words, I problematise the understanding of the new assessment policy by teachers.

Proposition Two

Teachers may not be able to reconcile their own assessment beliefs and capacities with the stated goals of a new assessment policy

Teachers will react to their perceptions of change in different ways depending on their own guiding beliefs and capacities. I agree:

Changes in beliefs are even more difficult: they challenge the core values held by individuals regarding the purposes of education; moreover, beliefs are often not explicit, discussed, or understood, but rather are buried at the level of unstated assumptions.

(Fullan, 2001:44)

My proposition that teachers may not reconcile their own beliefs and capacities about a new policy with the stated goals of the policy is based on the fact that teachers seldom if ever, are provided with opportunities to overtly articulate their beliefs and capacities about new policies. This assertion is supported by House and McQuillan (1998) who observed that the broad goals of reforms remained far removed from the everyday lives of teachers. The way reforms are introduced to teachers is usually by telling them about the goals, aims and principles of the reform (see Chisholm, 2000: 57). Beliefs and capacity are related to will and commitment, the essential requirements that matter in policy implementation (McLaughlin, 1998).

Proposition Three

Teachers may find that traditional assessment practices (that is, examinations and testing) hold greater efficacy in the classroom than the alternatives required by a new assessment policy

I assert that their assessment practices will be based on their past historical context and experiences, in other words in ways that they were assessed as students, in ways that they are familiar with, by following the existing traditional practices present at the schools and by the present conditions, opportunities and constraints present in the classroom and the school. In other words they will use assessment in a linear, sequential manner, mostly for grading and promoting students rather than connecting it meaningfully to teaching and learning.

In using these propositions to explore and understand the relationship between policy and practice, I must reiterate and emphasise, and as stated previously, that if the propositions prove to be true, I will not use them pejoratively by ascribing it to teacher deficiency, but rather to various other possibilities. Furthermore, as stated previously, I view teachers as active agents of and for change, therefore I treat them as my key informants or 'primary unit of analysis'.

How I use deep change in my research

Each of the propositions that I have constructed is linked to the research questions in this study. I therefore examine the data from each case study in relation to the policy analysis described in Chapter One of this study, and this conceptual framework to ascertain whether each teacher:

- Developed deep and sophisticated understandings and beliefs concerning the new assessment policy;
- Developed the new knowledge and skills or capacity in assessment as required by the policy;
- Practiced the different types of assessment as required in the new assessment policy;

- Made the kinds of changes expected by the assessment policy, or made other the kinds of changes described in the conceptual framework.

In other words I make a three-way comparative analysis between the new official policy on assessment, the conceptual framework on deep change and the teacher case reports. I shall employ this three-way comparative analysis to explain the continuities and discontinuities between the new official policy on assessment and the teachers' assessment practices. This explanation is located within the broad purpose of the study, that is: understanding the relationship between macro-level policies and micro-level practice.

This conceptual framework on deep change, in addition to its potency in understanding the relationship between policy and practice, guided me in choosing an appropriate methodology to guide the study in responding to the three research questions mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Summary of Chapter Three

In this chapter I advance and articulate a new conceptual framework called 'deep change' as a theoretical tool to examine and explain the relationship between policy and practice. I describe different types of change including deep change. The importance, strengths and limitations of deep change are discussed. The chapter makes three propositions with regard to teacher change that would be tested empirically by the data collected in this study. I suggest that for the successful implementation of policy teachers need to change deeply. The chapter explains how the propositions made in the study could be tested in light of the new conceptual framework.

The next chapter explains the research methodology employed in this study.