

**TRACING THE IMPLEMENTATION TRAJECTORY OF AN EDUCATION
POLICY:**

The Case of Whole School Evaluation

Anusha Lucen

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a masteral degree in
Education (PE) at the University of Pretoria, South Africa

Supervisor

Prof. Jonathan Jansen, University of Pretoria, South Africa

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Abstract

What happens to the implementation trajectory of a specific policy as it is shaped by multiple stakeholder understandings and competing policy influences in the school environment? The specific case in focus is the new government policy in South Africa on Whole School Evaluation (WSE). This policy requires that schools conduct internal self-evaluations, which will be followed by external evaluations and the implementation of school development plans for the purpose of bringing about school improvement. The purpose of this study is to explain how different stakeholders (education planners, teachers, and principals) understand and enact WSE policy within the school environment given the competing policy demands in the South African context.

My study is unique for three reasons. First, I wish to cancel out explanations for possible policy failure that can be attributed to a lack of commitment to the new WSE. I will be seeking to understand how policy is implemented in contexts where there is a readiness to receive and manage change. Second, I will compare rival stakeholder understandings and trace the influence of these competing understandings on the implementation process and outcomes within the South African school context and, third, investigate how one policy is understood and acted-on, given the competing demands of related policies on schools and the practitioners working in the sampled schools.

The specific research questions that guided this investigation are the following:

1. How do various stakeholders in the school environment *understand* WSE policy?
2. How do schools *implement* WSE policy given the presence of other evaluation related policies in the same school environment?

Data was collected over a period of one year using a multi-method approach. Multiple methods of data collection included using in-depth, semi-structured *interviews* (both

individual and focussed group sessions) with stakeholders, *observations of critical incidents* in the policy implementation process, *document analysis*, photographs, teacher diaries, field notes, free writing schedules and structured questionnaires.

The main findings from the study are the following:

- that when implementers are faced with multiple competing policies their implementation stance is determined by what is considered to be practical, immediate and known
- that for policies to have the desired impact there has to be a high degree of “coherence” among the different policies as well as “coherence” within individual policy frameworks. Furthermore, a combined and well-co-ordinated approach to multiple policy implementation is necessary for the policies to have the desired impact
- that for policies to have the desired impact there has to be a high degree of “coherence” within the minds/understanding of practitioners
- that stakeholders who have negative experiences of a particular policy issue remain sceptical about the value of similar policies. Stakeholders draw on these experiences to guide their future actions
- that school-site conceptions of evaluations are constantly developed and changed as a result of multitudinous “forces of influence”
- that homogenous culture, bureaucratic responsiveness and hierarchical organisation together compose a positive response to official policy
- that the course of policy implementation is influenced both negatively and positively by variables operating within and outside the school context

Finally the insights gained from this study hold practical as well as theoretical significance. Not only does it offer planning insights for the North West province in relation to WSE implementation, but it also serves to unpack the “black box” of policy implementation. It deepens our understanding of the problems faced with implementing planned change in transforming contexts even in cases where there is a receptiveness to change.

10 key words

Whole School Evaluation, case study, policy implementation, understanding of policy, policymaking, Development Appraisal System, Systemic Evaluation, education policy, multiple policies, human and social sciences.

My greatest source of inspiration.

You allowed me the freedom and gave me the courage not to be afraid to question, the ability to set goals and always raise the bar, and most importantly, the desire to be myself and grow and realise my dreams.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

"It is possible to move a mountain by carrying away small stones."

This work is dedicated to my late dad, Mr Laldaparsad (Sonny) Mohan.

This dissertation represents the culmination of a significant process and stage in my life. It has been a process of personal discovery as well as intellectual discovery. My greatest source of inspiration and motivation has been my father. You allowed me the freedom and gave me the courage not to be afraid to question, the tenacity to set goals and always raise the bar, and most importantly, the desire to be an independent intellectual and to challenge myself and grow and realise my dreams.

I would like to honour my supervisor, Professor Anandita Jureid of the University of Pretoria, for his guidance, constant encouragement and personal interest shown from the initial design of the research through to the final preparation of the dissertation. Words cannot express my deep respect and admiration for him. His role has been more than that of a supervisor as he has consistently inspired me through greater insights in my career as well as provided support in critical moments in my professional life. Thank you for being a true advisor and educator – for his many pertinent questions, thoughts and pieces of data that I gathered along the way. Your faith in me, trust, advice and support have been a constant source of inspiration and courage which allowed me to complete this dissertation. I am honoured to have had you as my supervisor.

In addition, I recognise and honour friends and colleagues whose advice, affection and encouragement have challenged and sustained me over the years.

Special thanks to Anandita Jureid for sharpening my focus through her incisive questions and for being my sounding board, constantly pushing me to do my best. I am also deeply indebted to her for the nuggets of wisdom she has shared with me and for her confidence in my abilities to succeed in completing this dissertation.

To the National Department of Education officials, North West Department of Education officials, Wagyns High principal, staff and governing body, Union of Teachers

Acknowledgements

“It is possible to move a mountain by carrying away small stones.”

Chinese Proverb

This dissertation represents the culmination of a significant process and stage in my life. It has been a process marked by educational and professional discovery as well as personal growth. Whilst I am deeply indebted to and appreciate the guidance and critique of my family, colleagues and friends I do wish to single out and honour some of the intellectual and spiritual anchors of this study.

I would like to honour my supervisor, Professor Jonathan Jansen of the University of Pretoria, for his guidance, constant encouragement and deep personal interest shown from the initial design of the research through to the final preparation of the dissertation. Words cannot express my deep respect and admiration for him. His role has been more than that of a supervisor as he has constantly inspired me towards greater heights in my career as well as provided support at critical moments in my professional life. Thank you for being a true advisor and educator – for helping me turn jumbled thoughts and piles of data into a coherent story. Your willingness to listen, value what I had to say and ability to guide me gave me the courage to continue and complete this dissertation. I am honoured to have had you as my supervisor.

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To the National Department of Education officials, North West Department of Education officials, *Wagpos* High principal, staff and governing body, union officials,

district officials as well as the many others (too many to mention by name) who willingly participated by sharing their unique ideas and views in the research study.

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You made a stable and loving home for me and my brothers and sisters to thrive intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Thank you for everything. I am proud to be your daughter.

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Declaration of Originality

Refilwe Choma for her expert role in taking care of the domestic arena.

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Anusha Lucen

South Africa, April 2003

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DST	Divisional Support Team
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NQA/C	National Quality Assurance Continuity Committee
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
OPS/ELC	Office for Standards in Education
PGP	Professional Growth Plan
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAOU	South African Overseas University
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDT	Staff Development Team
SE	Systeme Evaluation
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study
WSE	Whole School Evaluation
WPET	White Paper on Education and Training

List of Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
COLTS	Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DAS	Development Appraisal System
DoE	Department of Education
DST	District Support Team
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NQACC	National Quality Assurance Co-ordinating Committee
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PGP	Professional Growth Plan
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAOU	Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwyserunie
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDT	Staff Development Team
SE	Systemic Evaluation
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study
WSE	Whole School Evaluation
WPET	White Paper on Education and Training

Chapter One

Orientation and Background

I was told by everyone I met that we have created a set of policies and laws in education and training that are at least equal to the best in the world...[Yet]the public believes that we have a crisis on our hands...The people of this country gave the national and provincial governments both a mandate and a responsibility to accelerate the delivery of basic services that will improve their quality of life. The people are entitled to a better education service, and they must have it.

Education Minister Kader Asmal¹

1.1 Introduction and rationale

What happens to the implementation trajectory of a specific policy as it is shaped by multiple stakeholder understandings and competing policy influences in the school environment? In recent South African history, school evaluation has had a very negative reception among teachers and learners. The evaluation of teachers and schools was associated with the hated system of state "inspections" in which bureaucratic assessments were done in order to control teachers, curriculum and examinations in line with the apartheid ideology (Kallaway 1984; Taylor & Vinjevold 1999; Hartshorne 1999). Nevertheless, following the installation of a democratic government in 1994, a suite of new policies on school and teacher evaluation promised to change the understandings and attitudes of practitioners by defining the ends of evaluation as professional development and school improvement. But would this work? Would teachers "buy-in" to the new policy ambitions for evaluation given their personal and institutional experiences of evaluation as judgmental, summative and punitive? How would such experiences and memories of evaluation affect not only teacher understandings of the new policies, but also the ways in which schools go about implementing such policies? And how would the implementation of one set of policies on school evaluation be influenced by the co-existence of other related evaluation policies in the same school environment? It was this body of questions (among others) that prompted me to pursue research in this field of study.

¹ Taken from speech entitled Call to Action: Mobilising Citizens to Build a South African Education and Training System for the 21 st Century, 27 July 1999.

I was also motivated to conduct the research because of my personal discomfort with current change assumptions of many policymakers in South Africa. There appears to be the misconception that a properly planned policy will be implemented as expected and will ultimately achieve the desired national goals.

My interests were further fuelled by evidence in the international literature context that reflected on the difficulty of the use of school evaluations (both self-evaluations and external evaluations) as a means of achieving school improvement and school effectiveness within the different education systems in the world, for example, England (Barber, Gough & Johnson 1995; OFSTED 1993), Australia (Department of Education, Victoria 1997); and New Zealand (NZ ERO 1991); (also see section 1.6). The specific case in focus is a new government policy in South Africa on “Whole School Evaluation” (WSE). This policy requires that schools conduct internal self-evaluations, which would be followed by external evaluations and the implementation of school development plans for the purpose of bringing about school improvement.

At the time of commencing the research I was employed in a government education department (the National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development²) tasked with researching policy reforms in relation to school effectiveness. I have also accumulated many years of experience as a classroom practitioner, and hence could also see reform from the perspective of those who are the end-users of such reform. At the time of writing this dissertation I was employed in the Department of Science and Technology where I was involved with the development of policies for governance of science, engineering and technology institutions which receive the “science vote” (parliamentary grant³). My lives as policy researcher/developer and classroom practitioner drew me closely towards the task of understanding the intersecting worlds of those who (in traditional terms) “make” policy and those who “implement” policy.

²The National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development was a directorate within the National Department of Education. The directorate was involved with policy analysis, conducting and commissioning research and encouraging dialogue on curriculum related matters. The focus of the new directorate is now on Race and Diversity issues.

³ These science, engineering and technology institutions (SETIs) are research and development institutions that are partly subsidised by the South African government. Their research mandates are based on broad national goals.

In part, because of the lack of a rigorous advocacy programme, principals and teachers expressed feelings of confusion about the expectations of the WSE policy as well as the roles that they were required to fulfil as stipulated in the policy. Furthermore, teachers at the receiving end of these policies had become overwhelmed by the “policy overload” from the Department of Education (DoE). I felt uneasy that no matter how noble the intentions of the WSE policy, its stipulated goals might not be achieved due to the reality of the situation that prevailed “on the ground”. In my research I tested these assumptions.

The WSE policy is aimed at complementing other quality assurance initiatives such as the Systemic Evaluation (SE) and the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS). The DAS policy, although agreed on by all stakeholders, had not been widely implemented at the time of my research. Instead, the WSE policy had taken precedence over the DAS policy and this continued to be a source of tension and frustration between government and education unions. My research assessed these related quality assurance policies with a view to explaining relationships and tensions between these policies and their influence on the implementation course of the WSE policy.

The general literature on school development and school improvement in developing contexts lacks analytic case studies of schools involved in systematic and strategic innovation (Jansen 1995; Harber 1999; Hartshorne 1999; Kallaway 1984; Jansen & Christie 1999). There is, in my opinion, a need for fine-grained analytic case studies that reflect the experience of schools that are managing change in these turbulent times. Most of the literature and theorising in public policy and implementation was based on North American and European experiences, which differed considerably from those of many developing countries (Hargreaves 1998; Fullan 1998; Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds, Wilcox, Farrell & Jesson, 1999; Mortimore 1998; Barth 1990; Hopkins 1990, 1996, 2001b). The problem that exists is that there is limited development of theory building on policymaking and implementation in developing countries. A dearth of textbooks and case studies based on typical situations in developing countries has limited our understanding of educational change. In seeking to understand the world of policymakers and that of implementers, I believe this qualitative case study has the potential to contribute to the rather limited knowledge base on *policy implementation* in developing countries. In particular this study will extend the knowledge base through a more complex and nuanced understanding of

change, by providing new empirical evidence through the use of a diverse combination of methodological approaches to data collection.

Furthermore, the findings from this research might be useful to: firstly, policymakers who design policies for schools so that such policies take account of practitioner beliefs and practices; secondly, provincial⁴ and district managers for the purpose of planning in-service training to support quality assurance policy initiatives; thirdly, evaluation examiners for the purpose of alerting them to the experiences of various role-players and, fourthly, policy analysts concerned with the evaluation of policy alternatives. On a personal level, by engaging in this rigorous study on *Tracing the implementation trajectory of an education policy: The case of Whole School Evaluation* I will be developing my capacity and enriching my understanding of policy implementation in the school context so that I will be able to execute my duties as a policy researcher/developer within the Department of Science and Technology more effectively and with greater confidence.

The insights gleaned from this research will also assist me significantly to contribute on a practical and intellectual level to theory and research on policy implementation, particularly in the case of implementing competing evaluation policies in a context where evaluation is viewed negatively by the implementers. Undoubtedly, these insights deepen our understanding of the problems faced with implementing planned change in transforming contexts even in cases where there is a receptiveness to change.

1.2 Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to explain how different stakeholders (education planners/implementers, teachers and principals) understand and enact WSE policy within the school environment given competing policy demands on schools.

Much has been written in South Africa on schools where the necessary “ingredients” for successful policy implementation is lacking (DoE 2000a; Malan 2000; Kanjee, Prinsloo, Pheiffer & Howie 2001). My study is unique for three reasons: firstly, I cancel out explanations for possible policy failure that may be attributed to a lack of commitment to

⁴ There is a national and nine provincial education departments in South Africa. The provincial departments are autonomous.

the new policy – in this case WSE; I seek to understand how policy is implemented in contexts where there is a readiness to receive and manage change; secondly, I compare rival stakeholder understandings and trace the influence of these competing understandings on the implementation process and outcomes within the South African school context and; thirdly, I also investigate how one policy is understood and acted on, given the competing demands of related policies on schools and the practitioners working in the sampled schools.

1.3 Research questions

This study therefore examines stakeholder understandings of WSE and traces the ways in which schools implement this policy (WSE) given the co-existence of other evaluation-related policies affecting the same school. The specific research questions that guide this investigation are the following:

1. How do various stakeholders in the school environment *understand* WSE policy?
2. How do schools *implement* WSE policy given the presence of other evaluation-related policies in the same school environment?

1.4 Policy context for Whole School Evaluation

The discourse of performance and accountability emerged within the South African context after the legal termination of apartheid in the early 1990s, the inauguration of the first democratic and non-racial government in April 1994 under the Presidency of Nelson Mandela⁵, and the emergence of a new education system later that year. I will trace the trajectory of quality assurance-related policies post-1994 until June 2000, when the new Minister of Education (Professor Kader Asmal⁶) introduced the national policy on WSE to the country. My discussion will then culminate in a brief description of the WSE policy in which the practice of performance is prominently expressed.

⁵ Nelson Mandela was the first president of the African National Congress (former exiled liberation movement) and now dominant party in South Africa

⁶ The first post-apartheid Minister of Education was Professor Sibusiso Bengu who held the post from 1994-1999. Professor Kader Asmal became the second Minister of Education in 1999.

The visionary “Yellow Book” (1994), of the African National Congress (ANC) may be regarded as the base document for all subsequent policies, and demonstrated a commitment to participation and “process” in policy work. It was surprising, therefore, that the first official policy documents of the new state were premised on statements of final outcomes, on expert-driven change, on a “top-down” policymaking apparatus that marginalised stakeholder involvement in the planning and execution of educational change, and on individual and institutional performance (Jansen 2001c).

The “Yellow Book” was followed in 1995 by the first White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) of the new government. Officially, this document, which framed the core values and vision of the newly established Government of National Unity, stated that particular attention would be paid to “the performance of the education and training system in the improvement of quality, equity, productivity (effectiveness) and efficiency” (p14). According to this comprehensive policy statement, “improving efficiency and productivity is essential in order to justify the cost of the system to the public, to secure more funds for development when they are needed, to raise the quality of performance across the system, and thus improve the life chances of the learners” (p23). Furthermore, it claims that “the restoration of the culture of teaching, learning and management involves the creation of a culture of accountability” (p22). The WPET holds that there must be a common purpose or mission among principals, educators, learners and governing bodies, with mutually agreed and understood responsibilities, and lines of cooperation and accountability.

Clearly, it is the WPET (1995) that first makes reference to concepts such as quality, productivity, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability in the system, all of which seem to foreshadow the WSE initiative.

Whilst practitioners continued with their individual battles of teaching and assessment of performance in their classrooms, another policy initiative relating directly to the measurement of performance was released. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995, which requires that Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) bodies be established for the purpose of monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards and qualifications, made its entrance into the policy arena. Highlighted in this Act are monitoring and auditing on the basis of national standards.

As South African policymakers and decision makers became consumed with the drive to improve “effectiveness” and “efficiency” of the education system, a decision was taken that South Africa would participate in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)⁷ in 1994/1995 and, again, South Africa was one of 38 countries in the repeat study in 1998/1999. For the first time in history, international studies that indicate comparative standing in pupil attainment are conducted and taken seriously by governments (Taylor & Vinjevold 1999). It is not difficult to understand why a developing country such as South Africa needed to participate in such a study – there was a desperate need for baseline information on learner performance in mathematics and science education for informed decision making on the development of curricula, organisation and management of schooling, and pedagogical approaches and processes at class level. Furthermore, since international comparisons are assuming greater importance owing to shared global economic realities, South Africa’s participation was imperative if it wanted to remain globally competitive (Howie 2001).

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Shortly after the first TIMSS study, the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, designed to inscribe in law the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education and to formalise the relations between national and provincial authorities, was released. According to this policy, the Minister is mandated to “direct that standards of education provision, delivery and performance throughout the Republic be monitored and evaluated by the Department annually or at specified intervals, with the object of assessing progress” (paragraph 8, section 3(3)). One way in which this is to be achieved is that the national education system undertakes the monitoring and evaluation in co-operation with the provincial departments of education. Furthermore, the national education system is charged with the responsibility of enhancing professional capacities in monitoring and evaluation, as well as with assisting authorities with available public resources to improve the standards of education provision and performance.

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In this policy, reference is made to concepts such as monitoring and evaluation as well as time-frames are given, that is, this has to be done annually or at specified intervals. Particular reference is also made to the use of public resources to improve the standards of education provision and performance.

⁷ The TIMSS study was conducted by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC). Learners were tested in Mathematics and Science. Contextual data was collected in addition to quantitative data.

However, since 1995, much of the attention to quality continued to be at a legislative rather than operational level. By 1997, notions of efficiency, effectiveness and standards were increasingly under discussion and certain initiatives were taken in that year to institutionalise quality functions and to address quality concerns directly. These include the re-launched Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service (COLTS) campaign, and the establishment of the Quality Assurance Directorate in the National Department of Education.

This search for quality, effectiveness and efficiency was accompanied by a complete re-engineering of the education system by adopting the educational philosophy known as outcomes based education (OBE) which became entrenched in all education and training policies. Outcomes Based Education signalled a paradigm shift away from what was being taught in a period of instructional time to what learners can do. This was followed by the introduction of the school curriculum plan, called Curriculum 2005 (C2005), pointing to the future and suggesting a time scale for implementation. Implementation began in 1998 in Grade 1, followed by Grade 2 in 1999, Grade 3 and 7 in 2000, and Grade 4 and 8 in 2001. According to this curriculum plan, learners had to achieve a total of 66 learning outcomes during the course of their schooling career.

By the end of 1998, a year after the establishment of the Quality Assurance Directorate in the National Department of Education, the so-called Assessment policy for Grades R⁸ to 9 and ABET⁹ was released. This was a generic document, which provided details for assessment within an OBE framework and was released at least a year after the official C2005 document was released.

This policy also provides for the conducting of Systemic Evaluation (SE) at the key transitional stages, viz. Grade 3, 6 and 9. SE must be conducted as a means of determining on a periodic basis the strengths and weaknesses of the learning system thereby providing constant feedback to role-players for the purpose of improving performance of the learning sites (i.e., schools) and the learning system. The main goals of this document may be seen

⁸ Grade R refers to instruction prior to entry level (i.e., Grade 0). Grade 9 is the exit level for compulsory education.

⁹ Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is provided for at levels 1-4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and level 1 on the General Education & Training Band.

to “assess the effectiveness of the entire system and the extent to which the vision and goals of the education system are being achieved” (p14).

This obsession with the need to improve performance in education continued with policy and legislation acting as major levers for fundamental change. The Further Education and Training (FET) Act (Act no. 98 of 1998) was launched. According to this Act, it is obligatory for the Director-General, subject to the norms set by the Minister, as contained in the National Education Policy Act, to assess and report on the quality of education provided in the FET phase¹⁰.

The spotlight then turned from learner performance to focus squarely on teacher performance with the release of the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) of 1998. In official terms, the goal of the DAS was to outline a model for developmental appraisal in order to facilitate personal and professional development of educators so as to improve the quality of teaching practice and education management (DoE 1998a:3). The impetus for the historical development of the new development appraisal system has been linked to the breakdown of inspectorate and subject advisory services in the majority of schools in the country. Between 1985 and the early 1990s, it was almost impossible for inspectors and subject advisors to go into schools, therefore, “within the organised teaching profession the need was felt to develop an appraisal instrument which would be acceptable to all stakeholders and would enhance the development of competency of educators and the quality of public education in South Africa” (DoE 1998a). In this document reference is made to concepts such as quality and effectiveness. It also emphatically states that enhancing the development of competency of educators may raise standards of the education system (p68).

The process was agreed to and signed on by all stakeholders (Education Labour Relations Council Resolution Number 4 of 1998). A comprehensive training manual for developmental appraisal was launched and training also took place in pockets in the various provinces. The new DAS was to be implemented in 1999, with all structural and other

¹⁰ Schooling in South Africa is divided into two phases i.e., General Education and Training phase (GET) which includes Grade 0 to Grade 9 and the Further Education and Training phase (FET) which includes Grades 10 to 12.

arrangements being put in place in 1998. It appears, however, that the DAS document was not, and to date has not been, implemented in most schools in the country.

All the policies mentioned epitomise similar understandings that the new democratic South Africa is committed to providing schools that will function effectively and provide quality education for all learners. Also highlighted in these policies is the need to develop accountability at all levels of the system.

On the 25 June 1999, President Mbeki¹¹, in his State of the Nation Address to Parliament, acknowledged that South Africa had committed leaders and excellent policies and laws but at the same time large parts of the education system were seriously dysfunctional. Rampant inequality existed, teacher morale was low, governance and management were yet to strengthen and *quality and learning outcomes were poor* (DoE 2001b). Against this backdrop, Minister Kader Asmal outlined his Call to Action in July 1999 which was operationalised in January 2000 in a plan known as *Tirisano*, a Sotho word meaning “working together”. *Tirisano* identified nine strategic priorities, which are divided into five programme areas, as the basic building blocks to enable the development of a fully functioning education and training system. *Tirisano* is in line with global shifts in school and educational reform, which focus on outcomes and outputs, accountability, efficiency and performance.

Programme 2 of the five-part *Tirisano* programme focuses on the issue of school effectiveness and educator development. The new national policy on WSE was released with the intention of contributing towards achieving Programme 2. However, the origins and impetus of WSE must be seen more broadly and in the historical context of school supervision in South Africa.

At this point, it is important to remind ourselves of the South African model of school supervision pre-1994. In the apartheid era there was not one system with 19 different racial and ethnic departments but 19 different systems. In most of these systems there were specific “panels for inspection” that were constituted of an ad hoc group of officials who were generally not specialists in any particular fields. In the new model (i.e. WSE) it is

¹¹ President Thabo Mbeki became the second president of the African National Congress, the dominant party in South Africa.

proposed that only specialists who have accreditation and who have been registered as supervisors should form part of the evaluation panel.

Inspections at the beginning started off as quality control but later slipped into control giving rise to numerous complaints about nepotism and victimisation. A criticism levelled against this type of supervision was that it was not system-wide, organised or professionally executed. It was widely regarded as a political instrument for ensuring conformity with the ideology of apartheid. The inadequacy of existing systems of school supervision and evaluation is one of the main reasons for the emergence of WSE.

Given the limitations of “inspection panels”, matriculation results have been the only available indicator of school effectiveness. It appears as if the consistently low “matric” results might be another major reason for embarking on WSE. An article in the Sunday Times¹² (1999) titled the “Schools of Fame and the Schools of Shame” clearly exposed schools that were achieving and those that were underperforming. Comprehensive “lists” of schools falling into these categories were published in national newspapers. Government generated these lists as a public measure of accountability; a point of political pressure on schools to “perform”. This push for external accountability through internal improvements further explains the emergence of WSE.

Also, there is growing public discontent over ineffective schools coupled with negative media coverage of educational dysfunction in public schools (DoE 2001b). The subsequent political pressure on government to intervene effectively in this context of dysfunctionality may therefore be seen as another reason for the production of the WSE policy by the DoE.

In the preceding section, I have provided a brief discussion on the policy context for WSE in order to locate the policy on WSE within a growing governmental concern with performance – reflected in a suite of evaluation-related policies that seek to raise standards, improve quality and evaluate “performance” against specified outcomes. I will now provide a snapshot of the envisaged policy process.

¹² The Sunday Times is a leading newspaper in South Africa with a readership of over a million.

1.5. Whole School Evaluation: a snapshot of the envisaged policy process

The key proposals in the policy are:

- (a) that schools will conduct self-evaluation based on nationally accepted criteria. It is the responsibility of the school principal to undertake the school's self-evaluation activities as well as to identify an evaluation co-ordinator to liaise with the monitoring and evaluation team that visits the school.
- (b) that well-trained supervisors will conduct an external evaluation of the school. A pre-evaluation visit would first be carried out by an accredited supervisor to build a profile of the general level of functionality of the school.
- (c) that nine key areas will be evaluated. The nine focus areas identified are: basic functionality of the school; leadership, management and communication; governance and relationships; quality of teaching and educator development; curriculum provision and resources; learner achievement; school safety, security and discipline; school infrastructure and parents and the community. The supervisory team will comprise of accredited supervisors balanced across all nine focus areas.
- (d) that the number of supervisors will also depend on the size of the school and the resources available. Reviews would be conducted between three and four days of the week depending on the size of the school. If there is an urgent need to set the school on an improvement course, then follow-up surveys will be conducted within 6-9 months of the whole school review.
- (e) that multiple sources of evidence will be used to enable valid and reliable judgements to be made and sound feedback to be provided both to the schools and to the decision makers. There are nine specific detailed instruments that will be used in the evaluation of schools.
- (f) that when summarising the scores on the various aspects evaluated, the overall school performance will be rated using the following scale: 5 (outstanding); 4

1.6 (good); 3 (acceptable, needs improvement); 2 (unsatisfactory); 1 (unacceptable) and 0 (grade is irrelevant or inapplicable).

(g) that the supervisory team will present the school with an oral report in a recorded meeting before they leave the school. A written report will then be submitted to the District Office and the school within four weeks of evaluation. If schools believe that they have been unfairly evaluated then they can register their complaint with the office of the Head of Department. The National Department will act as the final arbiter in any complaints procedure.

(h) that the evaluations are linked to a developmental strategy where each school will use their evaluation reports to develop its own school developmental plans. The District Support Teams (DSTs) will assist schools to implement the recommendations of the evaluation report through school improvement planning. School evaluation reports and improvement plans should lead to district, provincial and national improvement plans which address areas needing improvements within specified time frames.

The WSE policy introduces a monitoring and evaluation process that “is regarded vital to the improvement of quality and standards of performance in schools” (DoE 2001c:7). It is therefore a tool both for the improvement of a school’s performance and for more effective accountability of the school system. The purpose of this policy is not to look at individual aspects of the school but to look at the school as a unit. The prescribed model is expected to be supportive and developmental rather than punitive, with a built-in feedback mechanism that enables schools and their support structures to agree on improvement targets and developmental plans. WSE, which also involves multiple stakeholder roles, will have to be implemented together with other competing policy influences in schools; therefore there is a need to understand how this policy will unfold given this context.

The WSE policy stipulates school improvement as one of the objectives. To what extent will this policy be successful in achieving this goal? What are the international experiences in the use of evaluation policies for the purpose of school improvement? This is the subject of the next section.

1.6 Implementation of evaluation policies as a catalyst for school improvement: an international perspective

The WSE policy is premised on the use of “evaluations” as a catalyst for school improvement. Given the negative connotation that evaluations have in the South African context one can argue whether the noble intentions of the policy will be met. The question that emerges is: What is the success rate with the use of evaluations as a means of school improvement in the international arena? In this section I provide a window into the international experiences in the use of evaluations as a means of encouraging improvement.

The literature indicates that quality assurance approaches to school review and improvement are now a core element of state and government school systems in many parts of the world, for example, England (Barber, Gough & Johnson 1995; OFSTED 1993), Australia (Department of Education, Victoria 1997) and New Zealand (NZ ERO 1991). The South African national policy on WSE is no different in that the policy tends to link together evaluation and development. Lander and Ekholm (1998) argue that too great an emphasis on goal-based accountability results in a reduction of professional commitment and autonomy. According to Lander and Ekholm, policymakers’ view of evaluation is more as a means of gathering information and achieving control, rather than as a tool for school improvement. Schools that are striving to use evaluation as means of school improvement are, according to Lander and Ekholm, likely to have their efforts negated by the predominant evaluation as management orthodoxy.

Evaluation as a political tool for improving or managing schools and teaching is an idea largely suggested from above, not introduced from below. It may be argued that policymakers, by insisting on evaluations at school level, seek to pursue accountability and thus to influence power relationships within the educational system. Compared with the earlier system of teacher inspection the most novel feature of the new WSE approach is that the policymakers, by using evaluation and pressing schools to self-evaluate, are opening up schools to external scrutiny. The notional monopoly enjoyed by teachers of pedagogic knowledge is being challenged more than ever before. For teachers, evaluation can offer the prospect of more focused professional development and a richer, more equal, partnership with stakeholders. It also, however, threatens the hegemony of their professional judgement in all matters educational.

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The Norwegian government has a high regard for evaluation as a means of improving schools. Teachers are advised and instructed on how local evaluation should be done by providing every teacher with a copy of a booklet entitled *Underveis*. According to Granstrom and Lander (1995), the booklet claims that evaluation will promote rational planning and teaching. It insists that the staff do evaluation collaboratively, and it should also include parents as stakeholders. Democratic involvement is used as the justification for engaging parents, but there is also fear that the interests of stakeholders may harm schools if they are based on ignorance and misinformation. Thus school-based evaluation also needs to build legitimacy for the school “to strengthen the school’s position in the community” (Granstrom & Lander 1995:5).

Teachers’ roles are expected to be changed by the introduction of this booklet. The booklet seeks to give assurance that school-based evaluation is not concerned with judgements about the achievements of individual teachers, and no examples of this usage are given. But neither is the function of the collaborative process in achieving a common standard of acceptable teacher performance discussed. It is, however, clearly stated that the collaborative process is not voluntary: “It is not ... up to the individual teacher to decide if he or she wants to take part”, (Granstrom & Lander 1995:6). Many officials are confused about what school-based evaluation means for both school improvement and school governance. There is fear that many schools look upon evaluation as one improvement project among many, one that is finite and not for everyday use.

This example is by no means a success story about the use of evaluation for school improvement. Teachers have generally reacted with suspicious resistance to such government initiatives. What this example shows is that only schools already engaged in a process of school improvement can make good use of external feedback from an evaluation of their systems.

Other research provides an even more negative picture. Case studies of successful schools suggest that school evaluation does not play a leading role in the school improvement process (Vasstrom 1985; Ekholm 1990; Hameyer, Anderson, van den Akker & Ekholm 1995). When evaluation is introduced from above it is often used to satisfy the policymakers need to know and influence. Methods of evaluation are therefore more suited

to these needs and less to the needs of schools, which are often struggling with their informal analysis of the internal school improvement process.

It is clear that evaluation and its modest contribution to school improvement may well get lost in the struggle between the social technology of teaching and the everyday running of schools. My concern is that if evaluation as *management* and *control* becomes too dominant, it is likely that teachers will administer the kiss of death to the whole idea of WSE evaluation as a means of improving schools.

1.7 Limitations of my study

My research is an in-depth case study of a single school that is implementing WSE policy therefore the results will not be universally generalisable, although certain elements which may be derived from this descriptive inquiry could be transferable to similar educational settings, but would be determined by the degree of similarity between the two contexts. Every attempt is made to provide the reader with a thick, rich description of events as they unfold.

Furthermore, stakeholder understandings are not “fixed”, particularly given the rapid and constant change and evolution not only in the educational realm, but also in the stakeholders themselves. Their understanding is seldom objective or finite, which also restricts generalisability. The process of understanding is either of present or of past realities and conditions. Understanding is therefore not of tomorrow’s reality or of what the future conditions might be.

Another limitation pertains to the choice of the school. Since WSE was only being conducted at specific schools identified by the DoE, I had to select, from the list of schools identified for evaluation, a school that was both willing to implement policy and convenient, that is, with regard to accessibility.

Since the research deals with the trajectory focus and what the emerging effects are, data was collected over a period of one year. Hence short-term change/effects only will be captured. However, medium-term to long-term change will only begin to surface after a

period of at least two to three years of the implementation of the school development plan (Fullan 1998) and therefore will not be reported on in this research.

The school is an Afrikaans medium institution and the majority of the teachers are Afrikaans speaking. Most of the teachers were comfortable responding to questions in English. In some cases, teachers who could not express themselves in English chose to code switch during the interview. Quotations are captured in Afrikaans in certain instances so as to maintain the nuances as expressed by the interviewees.

1.8 An overview of the chapters

Because of the complexity of the terrain, I found that a variety of perspectives were necessary for addressing the research questions. A specific chapter is devoted to each of the research questions. I provide a preview to the chapters.

Chapter One, *Orientation and Background*, is the introduction that sets out the background to the study; provides a rationale, briefly outlines the emergence of the discourse of performance and accountability within the South African context setting the stage for the policy context for WSE policy, outlines the limitations of the study and closes with an overview of the chapters.

Chapter Two, *Chains of Thought: A critical synthesis of the relevant knowledge base on policy implementation*, offers a critical synthesis of the literature framing the problems of policy implementation. It explores the local as well as the international scene. The literature review reveals a gap in the research, a gap in the area of case studies on policy implementation in developing country contexts such as South Africa where competing policies are being implemented. A conceptual framework for understanding policy implementation is presented together with a set of propositions which will be tested in the course of this study. In short, the second chapter sets out to examine in more detail the big “black box” of policy implementation.

In Chapter Three, *Though there be madness, yet there is method!* I provide a detailed narrative account of the research processes engaged and then proceed to describe sampling procedures and specific research instruments. I infuse into this chapter a discussion of the

difficulty of conducting research in contexts undergoing transformation and present my reasons for changes that I effected to the original research design.

In Chapter Four, *The Inquiry Context*, I outline in a continuous narrative the social and historical context of *Wagpos* High School. In a description of the social context I provide a deep, insightful and penetrating picture of the North West Provincial Education Department in general and the Brits district in particular – the macrocontext of the school. The history of the school is traced over eight decades in the detailed historical portrait, noting critical incidents in the life of the school in each of the decades. This overview culminates in a detailed description of the school as it exists today. I use a highly visual approach in this chapter, that is, textual data is interspersed with photographs which serve to convey the story more aptly.

Chapter Five, *Exploring the Tensions between Official Intentions and Stakeholder Understandings of Education Policy: The Case of Whole School Evaluation*, presents a critical documentary analysis of the WSE policy and two other related evaluation policies, that is, the DAS and SE. Besides presenting the documentary analysis, I incorporate the narratives of policymakers' and implementers' understanding of the WSE policy and the other competing evaluation policies. I infuse in this discussion statistical findings from questionnaires, which focused on establishing teacher understandings of WSE policy at the school level. I then trace patterns and rhythms of similarity and differences between the literal analysis of the three policies in conversation and the understandings of policymakers and implementers.

In Chapter Six, *Policy Implementation in the School Context*, I open a window into the policy implementation trajectory at *Wagpos* High School. I present a narrative account of the critical moments in the policy implementation trajectory and provide significant experiences and turning points that profoundly influenced the WSE policy implementation in the school. An effort was made in the composition of the narrative to distinguish trivial events from the turning points in the implementation story line; routine incidences from influential events. In this chapter I also include vignettes from the diaries of two teachers who captured their day-by-day lived experiences of the WSE policy implementation process.

Chapter Seven, *Theorising Change in Transformational Contexts*, the final chapter, draws on all the previous chapters, trying to pull together the main research concerns of my inquiry. I theorise about change based on the findings crystallised from my study on policy implementation. I discuss the implications of the study for policy planning and also make suggestions for further research.

1.8 Chapter summary

I have attempted in this chapter to capture the background to this study as well as provide my rationale for embarking on the study. This background reveals factors that influence policy implementation in the changing South Africa. I also present the process of finding the research focus for my study as part of my simultaneous endeavours as a researcher and a policy developer.

This research study focuses on how the various stakeholders in the school environment *understand* WSE policy. The aim of the study is to probe deeply into the experiences of stakeholders in order to gauge their understanding of this and other evaluation-related policies. It also deals with how schools *implement* the WSE policy given the presence of other evaluation-related policies in the same school environment.

In this opening chapter I have outlined the policy terrain post-1994 and culminate this discussion in a brief synopsis of the envisaged WSE process. The limitations of my study as well as an overview of the forthcoming chapters are also presented.

In the next chapter I foreground the literature on policy implementation from national and international contexts.

Chapter Two

Chains of Thought¹³: A critical synthesis of the relevant knowledge base on policy implementation

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present a critical synthesis of the literature on policy implementation with the following objectives in mind: firstly, to set the stage for the inquiry into the policy implementation debate, secondly, to utilise these perspectives so as to provide a conceptual platform to build the research data collection plan for this study, thirdly to develop appropriate research instruments used in the study, and fourthly, to provide the basis for the data analysis strategies employed.

The chosen focal areas arise as a response to the targeted research questions of this study, which are directed towards stakeholder understandings and implementation of policy. In *Section One* of this chapter, I outline the origins of implementation research as well as clarify definitions of implementation. I highlight the main “lessons learnt” from the first- and second-generation implementation research and identify the gaps in the literature. I further explore why there has been such a lack of attention to implementation in developing countries in general and South Africa in particular. Here I argue that the lack of attention to implementation in South Africa may be understood slightly differently because of the fundamental political changes that are being experienced.

Section Two begins with an identification of implementation models from a survey of literature on the implementation of policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. I have broadly identified six factors that have impacted on policy implementation and I have organised the discussion on “lessons learnt” in the follow-up section. In this section I also describe reasons presented in the voluminous national and international literature for the mismatch between policy and teacher practice and conclude this section by discussing the difficulty of managing multiple changes in the school context.

¹³ Inspiration for the title from Morrow, W. 1989. *Chains of thought*. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.

In *Section Three* I present the Van Meter and Van Horn Model (1975) of policy implementation for two reasons. Firstly, because it provides considerations on a theoretical basis for policy implementation and, secondly, because it shows the connections between the different variables impacting on policy implementation. Here I also present my critique of the model. I conclude this section by presenting some ideas from the literature on how to implement a government policy.

Finally, in *Section Four*, I draw on the understandings from the literature surveyed in the first three sections and present a tentative model with accompanying propositions for analysing policy implementation within the context of a rapidly changing educational scenario. The model with the propositions served as the framework for the rest of the research process of this study.

Section One

2.1.1 The “implementation problem”: what do we already know?

The national and international literature is replete with studies of policies that have failed to be implemented as planned (Louis & Miles 1990; Miles & Huberman 1984a; Grace 1995; McLaughlin 1987, 1998; Giacquinta 1998; DoE 2000a, 2001b). In most of these cases, “misjudging the ease of implementation is probably the most frequent error in policy planning” (Haddad 1995; see also Jansen 2001c, 2002; McLaughlin 1976, 1987, 1998; Fowler 2000). McLaughlin (1998) aptly reminds us of the complexity of implementation in her findings on the well-known Rand Change Agent Study; “It is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice, especially across levels of government. Contrary to the one to one relationship assumed to exist between policy and practice, the nature, amount and pace of change at school level is a product of local factors that are largely beyond the control of higher-level policy makers”(p12).

A comprehensive search of national databases (e.g. NEXUS database on current and completed research in Africa) and international data sources (Educational Resources Information Center) was conducted for the purpose of obtaining relevant literature. The literature was also generated from manual searches of existing policy journals available in South African libraries and literature available at policy centres, which do not ordinarily

appear in scholarly journals (e.g. Centre for Education Policy Development). Recent South African literature on policy and practice – as reflected in OBE is also included in the critical review. The literature focuses mainly on policy implementation in Europe and North America, with a reasonable literature base on policy implementation practice in the African countries. This synthesis also includes Donors to African Education (DAE) and World Bank literature on educational reform in developing countries.

2.1.2 Defining implementation

Before I elaborate on the discovery of the “implementation problem”, I should begin by saying what is meant by implementation as this will clarify ideas I discuss later in this section. According to Fowler (2000), implementation is the stage of the policy process in which a policy formally adopted by a government body is put into practice (p270). Nakamura and Smallwood (1980) define it as “the process of carrying out authoritative public policy directives”. Fullan (1998) defines the term implementation as “what was happening (or not) in practice” (p217). According to Fullan and Pomfret (1977), implementation refers to the actual use of an innovation or what an innovation consists of in practice.

Having reviewed the four contending definitions for implementation, I will adapt Fowler’s conception of implementation to simply mean a process in which government policy is put into practice, because this fits the common-sense meaning assigned to implementation in the South African context.

A further definitional matter remains – the meaning of success and failure with respect to implementation. It is perhaps tempting to think of implementation in either-or terms: either a policy is implemented, or it is not. The temptation should be resisted. It is almost impossible, even in developed countries, to find policies of more than trivial significance that are implemented precisely as intended. Yet there are probably few formally adopted policies that have no effects in practice or that have effects totally unrelated to or inconsistent with the original intention (Majone & Wildavsky 1978). Thus it is more appropriate to think of success and failure as ends of a continuum, and to be prepared to assess policies in terms of degrees of implementation (Choguil 1980). It is also important to recognise that a policy can be over-implemented, in the sense that its targets are over-

fulfilled. With respect to education in Africa, the most obvious examples relate to the unprojected increases in expenditures on schooling that have resulted. For the purposes of this research, fulfilment of policy objectives, like under-fulfilment, is considered at least partial failure of implementation.

What follows is a periodised account of the discovery of implementation and the “lessons learnt”.

2.1.3 Turning points: the discovery of implementation

The implementation research grew out of practical concerns. In the 1950s and 1960s the federal government of the United States of America provided millions of dollars for new reforms and naturally officials wanted to know if the money invested was achieving the intended results. Quantitative evaluations of these programmes resulted in statistical findings that were puzzling. Researchers then decided to use qualitative research methods to observe what was actually going on at the programme sites. Their statistical results were confusing because many programmes were non-events. No change was experienced because quite simply nothing was happening. This discovery stimulated research on implementation itself (Firestone & Corbett 1988). On the other hand, in developing countries the primary impetus came from the numerous five-year plans for national development adopted in the “First Development Decade”.

Also, in the early 1970s, it became clearer that with new intergovernmental initiatives, implementation was no longer just a management problem, confined to relations between a boss and a subordinate, or a teacher and principal, or even to processes within a single school. Implementation of education policies stretched across levels of government – from national education ministries to local districts and schools – as well as across the legislative, executive and administrative agents of government. As officials developed responses to the new education policies, the complexity of policy implementation was revealed. Undoubtedly, the discovery of the “implementation problem” came as a surprise to policy planners and analysts since at that time the almost unanimous view among them was that public policies, once in place, were automatically implemented in full. Complexities and uncertainties were at that time all associated with policymaking, *not* with implementation.

But what were the factors contributing to this myopia? There are four that are worthy of mention. The first is that for policymakers it was (and remains) tempting to assume that the world is “rational” rather than messy and, accordingly, that sound policies would meet no resistance. The second factor is that the priorities of the politicians and pressure groups involved tended to be only to get the policy onto the public policy agenda and what happened after policies were adopted received little or no attention – either because this was beyond their control or, in a more cynical view, because they did not care. The third factor concerns the scholarly disciplines. In the 1960s there was no organised system within the academy for the systematic study of public policy. The final factor concerns data constraints. Simply put, the empirical evidence was not readily accessible. The kind of evidence needed to assess implementation was difficult to collect and to evaluate. A comprehensive analysis of implementation requires that attention be given to multiple actions over an extended period of time, thus involving an enormous outlay of time and resources. It was perhaps for this reason, above all, that the discovery of implementation as a major issue did not come until the 1970s.

However, the implementation research that developed may be divided into two generations. The first generation began to appear in print in the early 1970s; the second in the late 1970s. Both generations of implementation research, although born at different times, are very much alive today providing policymakers and implementers with valuable insights. What follows is a brief overview of the lessons learnt from the first- and second-generation implementation research.

The major lesson that the first-generation research teaches is that implementation is difficult and that policies are implemented only if the implementers are willing and able to work hard to put them in place. First-generation research also suggests why policy implementations fail. The research conducted by Gross et al (1971) at Cambire School (pseudonym) in New England highlights many of the reasons for implementation failure. Firstly, implementers do not understand what they are supposed to do. A second problem revealed by the first-generation implementation literature is that implementers often lack the knowledge and skills necessary to implement policy. Finally, first-generation implementation research underscores the critical importance of resources (i.e. both materials and time). I strongly agree that these findings are consistent and resonate to a great extent with many of the findings for failed implementations even today.

As with the first-generation implementation research, the research of the second generation suggests that implementation is difficult and that many policies, perhaps most, are never really implemented. Instead a watered-down version is put in place and sometimes nothing changes at all. Unlike the first-generation research, the research of the second generation is more positive and suggests that implementation is possible. Although in successful implementations, “mutual adaptations” occur involving changes in both the implementers’ behaviour and in details of the policy design, the new policy does take effect (McLaughlin 1976). Most important, second-generation research suggests why some implementations succeed whereas others fail. Second-generation researchers have used carefully constructed quantitative and qualitative research designs to isolate the characteristics of strong and weak implementation.

But these are all developments to which research in the developing countries, and particularly research on education in the developing countries, has made a negligible contribution. Almost all of the progress toward the development of appropriate frameworks and testable hypotheses has come on a basis of research conducted on policies in Western countries, particularly in the United States. However, there has recently been much serious study of implementation problems in developing countries but the literature remains largely descriptive, generally uninformed by others to abstract from the Western experience, and for the most parts focussed on policy domains distinct from education. In the next section I will explore possible reasons for the lack of attention to implementation in developing countries.

2.1.4 Unravelling the complexities: policy implementation in developing countries

While developed states invest many resources on “implementation”, developing countries continue to focus minimum attention on it. The question that begs is: Why has there been such a lack of attention to implementation? The implementation process in developing countries is seen as being less prestigious than policymaking. Verspoor (1992) claims that, in a review of 19 developing countries, there is “an almost universal neglect of implementation issues”. The conclusion drawn is that policymakers tend to assume that a decision to bring about change will automatically result in changed policy or institutional behaviour instead of planning out the implementation stages, which follow from the decision to initiate change. The greatest weakness identified is that policy implementation

is not seen as an integral part of policy formulation with most policymakers viewing it as an add-on. Christie (1999:286) suggests that the important lessons to be learnt about policy processes are that policymakers cannot avoid responsibility for strategic engagement to implement change at the point of delivery and that a policy approach which separates formulation from implementation and does not recognise the importance of interactive processes in implementation cannot hope to achieve the change it envisages. Yet to many others the implementation process is assumed to be “a series of mundane decisions and interactions unworthy of any serious scholarly attention” (Khan 1989).

Obviously, this lack of attention to implementation in developing countries holds serious implications for development. Let me briefly sketch these implications. Firstly, there is a need for major policy changes to alleviate poverty and generate self-sustaining growth. Secondly, once policies are implemented in developing countries they may have comparatively greater and more enduring impacts (London 1993; Dyer 1999), and thirdly, such countries are unable to afford the inefficiencies implicit in the failure to implement policies. For these reasons, greater familiarity with issues relating to the implementation of educational reforms in these countries may have important implications for both policy and national development.

I want to argue that the lack of attention to policy implementation in a country such as South Africa, which is undergoing fundamental political change, may be understood slightly differently. When the newly elected African National Congress (ANC)-led government assumed power in 1994, it had to reflect through its policies the way in which the past inequalities were to be redressed and this had to be done at a rapid pace, otherwise they would be generating impatience and losing credibility amongst the masses. For the ANC-led government it was important to secure the transition process and several policies had to be crafted in a context where ensuring a smooth transition was as important as developing progressive policies for social transformation (Nzimande 2001). Government policymaking was about compromise and negotiation with very little attention, if any, to the implementation process. Change in the country was urgently required and the ANC-led government was compelled to deliver speedily on their promises to the nation (Manganyi 2001). Thus multiple policies have made their entrance into the education arena with very few, if any, giving attention to implementation.

As mentioned earlier, developing countries must endeavour to become more familiar with implementation issues as this will pave the path for national development. The next section of this review seeks to further this goal, both by surveying what is known or can be inferred about the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Section Two

2.2 Sub-Saharan African experiences in implementing policies

Implementation analysis identifies specific implementation models and factors impacting on policy implementation. It is to this issue that we now turn. This literature together with the other literature reviewed is eventually used to draw out constructs for the tentative conceptual model that I develop in the next section, for the purpose of guiding this research study.

2.2.1 Implementation models

The sub-field of implementation analysis is dominated by two broad and competing models. The first, and probably still the most influential, is referred to variously as the planning-and-control model (Majone & Wildavsky 1978), the research, development and diffusion (RDD) model (Havelock & Huberman 1977), the rational model (Jones 1982) or the top-down model (Hambleton 1983). Whatever the label, the model can be thought of as a modification of the Weberian notions of bureaucratic rationality long identified with public administration in order to take fuller account of possible barriers to policy implementation (Craig 1990). This model judges the success of implementation by the degree to which a policy is actually put into practice or by the degree to which the effects of a policy match the planned or intended effects. It assumes that the policy embodies clear and consistent objectives, that the administration is neutral, well informed, and that the implementation is an entirely separate enterprise that occurs after a policy is formulated. Resistance from individuals or organised groups is commonly attributed to unwarranted selfishness or to irrationality. In sum, if a policy and a target population come into conflict, it is the latter that is expected to give way. The policy remains inviolable.

Several critiques of this model relate to the “hyper-rationality and technocratic” nature of the model. The model, seen as linear and hierarchical, is completely insensitive to the complex and unique properties of school cultures. It fails to recognise that people faced with changes respond differently to different initiatives; therefore planned change is seldom achieved as anticipated. This model is based on the assumption that people have to be forced, controlled and directed towards achieving goals. Success is only seen in terms of direct fit between policy and practice.

The competing model also appears under various headings: the mutual adaptation model (Berman & McLaughlin 1978), the process model (Fullan & Pomfret 1977), the interaction model (Majone & Wildavsky 1978), the political model (Jones 1982), the “implementation game” model, (Bardach 1977), the participative or self-help model (Havelock & Huberman 1977) and the bottom-up model (Hambleton 1983). In this case it is inappropriate to describe a pure form or ideal type, since central to the model is an emphasis on the messiness, uncertainties and unintended consequences that characterise the implementation process. Scholars in this camp do not automatically assume that the administration in question is disinterested or adequately informed. They tend to see individual and group resistance to policies as rational rather than irrational, and the focus on the interaction of competing interests – the conflict, compromise, and negotiation – transforms policies in the course of their implementation. Adherents of this model favour muting the distinction between policy formulation and implementation, arguing that conflict over implementation is often a continuation of other means of earlier conflict over the substance of a policy.

The weaknesses of this model are that it is time-consuming and in instances where there is already a political mandate for a policy to be implemented there is usually no time for this process. Another limitation is that although the policy is designed after extensive consultation with role-players at the various levels and in various contexts, it is extremely difficult to design a policy that will be equally effective in the varying contexts.

For the sake of completeness, perhaps I should add that there is a third general perspective on these issues, although it is not one seriously represented within the sub-field of implementation analysis. This radical or political economy approach sees a preoccupation with implementation as misguided if not intentionally deceptive in that it largely assumes away the systemic, structural relationships that shape and constrain societal development.

Optimistic proponents of this perspective see change as possible, but not through the implementation of specific policies directed at social engineering. What is needed is a direct assault on the structural and institutional obstacles to change, for example, prior economic and political changes are necessary conditions for any serious effort at reform (Papagiannis, Klees & Bickel 1982; Simmons 1980).

These three frameworks presented in oversimplified versions when considered collectively put us in a better position to evaluate and to develop the implications of the largely atheoretical studies that have been produced on educational policy implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa as discussed in the next section of this literature review. They also make it easier to comprehend the disparate and often conflicting perspectives of the individuals responsible for or affected by these policies.

2.2.2 Factors impacting on policy implementation

I have organised the discussion under six headings: the policy message, political factors, resource constraints, the bureaucrats and the administrators, the teachers, and the client populations. It should be emphasised that the boundaries between the categories are not always clearly defined. It should also be noted that the ordering is in no sense intended to suggest the relative importance of the various sets of factors that impact on policy implementation. Presumably, the explanatory power of different variables will depend on the policy and on the context.

The policy message

There is unanimity among serious students of policy processes that the results of the formulation stage of policy put constraints on implementation and can decisively affect the probability of success. This is true if those responsible for formulating policies are unconcerned or uninformed about issues bearing on implementation. Accordingly, I have found it appropriate to begin this discussion on factors affecting implementation by focusing on what has been termed the policy message. I shall look in turn at each of the three major components of a policy message, the substance of a policy, the means specified for putting a policy into effect, and the way in which the substance and the means are communicated.

With respect to the substance of a policy, the fundamental issue is one of realism: can the policy be implemented under any foreseeable circumstances considering the changes proposed? There are three general and in some respects incompatible positions among those who maintain that implementation failures can be traced back to unrealistic policies. The first argues that the problems defined and ostensibly addressed by particular policies are in fact intractable, or at least cannot be resolved in the absence of massive social and attitudinal changes.

The second major position of a policy message is the means specified for putting policy

The second position concerning unrealistic policies assumes that the problems addressed are tractable and without revolutionary changes in the environment, but rather faults the particular strategy adopted. There are two sets of studies within this category. The first focuses on unrealistic assumptions or projections concerning monetary resources. With respect to Africa, several studies argue that policies were much too ambitious overall, given the funds likely to be available (Adeniyi 1980; Williams 1977), while others criticise policies for failing to take proper consideration of recurrent costs (Bray & Cooper 1979; Olsen 1984). The second set of studies emphasises what might be labelled unrecognised jointness, that is, the dependence of particular initiatives on other policies that have not been introduced or perhaps even contemplated. Fapohunda (1980) notes that policies of educational expansion have been adopted without appropriate provisions for the physical facilities, textbooks or other material resources that would be needed. Other studies point to the supply and quality of teachers, the key issue being that reforms have often been compromised because there was an unavailability of teachers to carry them out (Bray 1981; Sjostrom & Sjostrom 1983).

one of a policy message, the context in which a policy is
communicated may also have important effects on its prospects for implementation.

The third position stressing lack of realism at the formulation stage concerns policies that may perhaps be implementable but are not conducive to the larger objectives being sought. Studies of these “educational policy mishaps”, as they have been referred to (Psacharopoulos 1984), fall into two categories. Those in the first category focus narrowly on efficiency and argue that in view of the particular objectives sought, the changes introduced by a particular policy are inappropriate. The second category of studies focus on side effects, arguing that particular policies, however efficient when viewed narrowly, have undesirable larger consequences that should have been taken into account. Examples of studies in the first group are those that have criticised African policymakers for putting too much emphasis on physical facilities as opposed to teaching (Wallace 1980); on changes in

the curriculum as opposed to textbook provision (Heyneman 1984); and on secondary and higher education as opposed to basic education (Psacharopoulos 1984). Examples of studies in the group that emphasises unanticipated side effects include studies that put blame on misguided educational policies for what are considered high levels of urbanisation, youth employment, rural poverty, ethnic rivalry and other economic and social problems (Dore 1976; Oxenham 1984; Dexter 1981; Stone 1985).

The second major component of a policy message is the means specified for putting policy into effect. There may be numerous possible approaches to implementation for any given policy and the best approach may not be evident given that the goals of major policies are commonly multiple, vague and often conflicting (Majone & Wildavsky 1978). It is for this reason that the policymakers identify and institute an appropriate implementation strategy. Judging from the literature, this is the responsibility that educational planners and policymakers in Sub-Saharan Africa have frequently failed to meet or even recognise (Craig 1990). In cases where infrastructure was not available, it was not created (Bowden 1986; Jolly & Colclough 1972). If infrastructure did exist, either specific duties were not assigned or else they were distributed across inevitably competing ministries and agencies without adequate provisions for co-ordination (Ayoade 1983) or for continued links between the planners and the implementers (Choguill 1980; Fullan & Pomfret 1977). In many cases these lapses on the part of policymakers – these deficiencies in the policy message – seem to have been the root cause of implementation problems that followed.

The third and final component of a policy message, that is, the way in which a policy is communicated may also have important effects on the prospects for implementation. Implementation is most likely if a policy is straightforward and if its goals and mechanisms are expressed precisely. Complexity works against clarity and openness, and incoherence or vagueness may leave those responsible for implementation without needed guidance and provide opportunity for those bent on obstruction.

My extended discussion of this variable does not suggest that all implementation problems may be attributed to mistakes made at the policy formulation stage. Instead, I have intended to use this as a corrective to a bias in the opposite direction that may have emerged since the discovery of implementation, and also to serve as a context for the discussion that follows of issues specific to the implementation stage.

Political factors

Political patterns have unfortunate implications for both the design and the implementation of educational policies. What are some of the difficulties faced? Weak states can have great difficulty collecting the data needed to design sound policies, particularly the data from rural areas (Wildavsky 1986). Another constraint is that research and evaluation are commonly expected to show what the government wants shown, and no more (Levin 1981; Levy 1986). National leaders, obsessed with strengthening their grip on power, also dominate and distort policymaking by announcing reforms on their own initiative without consulting the responsible ministries or agencies. The goal is to reap short-run political advantage either from the actual reform or, perhaps more commonly, from the very announcement of the reform (Nkinyangi 1982; Saunders & Vulliamy 1983; Stock 1985). My view is that policies adopted in this way are likely to enhance the regime's control or legitimacy. Such policies tend to fall into two overlapping categories: policies that are responsive to strongly expressed public opinion, and policies that mobilise public resources that can be distributed selectively. Urwick (cited in Craig 1990) has explained the logic in the latter case as follows:

Political leaders, through management of the educational system, are able to distribute a variety of benefits, both material and symbolic, to selected clients and to vocal groups of potential supporters. These benefits – appointments and contracts, community prestige, the hope of personal advancement for staff employed and pupils certified – are exchanged for short-term gains in political influence. Not infrequently, the attractions of such exchange to rulers cause outright distortions of educational policy, in which professional advice and issues are wilfully ignored.

Attitudes and actions such as these are largely responsible for the deficiencies of policy design already discussed and for the associated problems with implementation. Such announced reforms are nothing but exercises in political posturing or obfuscation; political leaders have no real desire to see the reforms put into effect, and in the case of radical reforms may actually have cause to fear the consequences should the reforms succeed (Bray 1981; Lulat 1982; Nkinyangi 1982). At this stage, I want to direct attention to the policymaking process in South Africa. The making of policy in South Africa has been described as a struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism that would mark the shift from apartheid to post apartheid (Jansen 2001b). Therefore, a focus on details of

implementation will not be fruitful since it will miss the broader political intentions that underpin policymaking after apartheid (ibid).

But what needs to happen if innovative policies are to be successfully implemented? The literature signals a few important considerations. There is a need for sincere, strong and continuing support from political leaders as this will help to break down the resistance that may come from the affected populations. With respect to target populations, the most appropriate strategy is to mount a propaganda campaign designed to publicise the policy and the rationale behind it and, perhaps, to create a mystique about the policy that may generate a bandwagon effect. As to the implementation agents, rhetorical devices may also be used to accomplish little unless accompanied by incentives for task-oriented performance (Bowen 1982; Brett 1986).

Resource constraints

Failures to implement educational policies are often blamed on resource constraints (Nyerere 1985). It is risky to take such attributions at face value and it is important for analytical purposes to differentiate between those constraints that could have been foreseen and those that are unpredictable. In the former category should be placed the many examples in which resource difficulties arise for reasons relating to mistakes at the design stage; mainly because costs have been ignored or underestimated because of optimism about local or foreign funding or because of inappropriate budgeting procedures (Bray & Cooper 1979; Ergas 1982; Mosha 1983; Olsen 1984). In view of this, resource constraints should be cited as a reason for possible policy failure only when resources that have been promised or could realistically be projected have failed to materialise.

There are two observations that I would like to make at this stage. First, and contrary to common belief, resource constraints do not appear to have had a major effect on the implementation of educational policies in Africa (Craig 1990). In most cases, foreign donor agencies have been slow in delivering funds and this has delayed the implementation of projects (Adams & Chen 1981). Second, shifts in the political climate or the economic situation have also resulted in some African governments not following through on funding commitments (Ayoade 1983; Enaohwo 1985; Nyerere 1985). A related critical issue emerges, that is, we should not think that providing abundant resources will improve the

policy implementation. All this simply points to the fact that that we should not look only at resource constraints when attempting to account for implementation failures.

Bureaucrats and administrators

Civil servants are often saddled with the task of implementing hastily conceived policies that they consider misguided or unworkable. The frequency with which political leaders change their priorities, and with which countries change their leaders, creates a climate of uncertainty not conducive to the careful planning and the continuity that effective administration requires. The outcome is considerable distrust and fear of political leaders, and the development within civil service of an insular and defensive outlook – of siege mentality (Hofferbert & Erguder 1985).

This outlook together with the deep-rooted control orientation often results in behaviour that is superficially correct but in fact unproductive or even counterproductive. Therefore, in the African context the common hierarchical structure considered a hallmark of bureaucratic rationality may actually work against effective administration in two ways. Firstly, it is an obstacle to the inter-ministerial collaboration and the formation of intersectoral teams to balanced and sustained development (Choguill 1980). Secondly, it inhibits the free flow of information essential for productive administrations.

Differences in official rank tend to be associated with differences in social status, and this together with the preoccupation with control makes open communication across the ranks difficult and sometimes impossible. Feedback from those lower in the hierarchy is commonly interpreted as criticism and therefore is neither encouraged nor readily volunteered (Wildavsky 1986). Mainly for these reasons the morale of provincial, regional and district/local administration officials is low. Officials believe, usually with cause, that they occupy dead-end positions in which they are expected to do much with minimal resources and no incentives to motivate them. They typically respond by coping as best they can, which may entail deceptive behaviour and resisting accountability. The result is a bureaucracy focussed less on the completion of assigned tasks than on the avoidance of error (and error detection) and on the protective covering provided by adherence to routines (Grindle 1981; Jones 1982; Stone 1985; Wildavsky 1986).

To be effective, educational administrators must know that their superiors support them. However, the literature reflects that the situation that prevails is bleak. Regional and local offices are chronically understaffed and overworked, with the result that little may be accomplished other than essential paperwork, if that. Tied to their desks or limited by inadequate funds and facilities for travel, district officials frequently do not know what is really transpiring in the schools and hence may be in no position to help principals and teachers understand new policies or adjust to changes they mandate (Taylor 1981).

Another factor that may impact on policy implementation relates to the interaction of administrators and teachers. From the administrator's perspective, policy implementation problems result primarily from the low quality and inattention to duty of the teachers (Craig 1990). The major obstacles, the literature suggests, are the poor quality of pre-service training that teachers receive and the lack of attention given to in-service training. From other perspectives the administrators also do not fare so well. They often lack the experience and training required to guide teachers in the process of policy implementation.

While there remains considerable room for improvement in both the effectiveness and the integrity of educational administration, the picture is not entirely bleak. There are indications that the general situation may be improving, with ministries placing more emphasis on results and less on adherence to routine, giving greater discretion to local officials, encouraging team work and even input from local communities, and instituting better procedures for monitoring and evaluating the results (Conyers 1981; Wilks 1985).

The teachers

Teacher quality is a major problem in African countries and so are the low morale and low levels of commitment that characterise the profession. Basically, politicians and administrators have not adequately put mechanisms in place to provide sustained support and assistance needed to upgrade the teaching corps. Furthermore, planners have failed to adequately take into account the limitations of those expected to put policy into practice in the classrooms. However, it is clear that teachers who are poorly trained and have low levels of motivation are not effective agents of reform.

Even if teacher quality were not an issue, teachers could still be a major barrier to the implementation of new policies, and for three general reasons (refer to next section for a detailed discussion). The first is that teachers may doubt that putting such policies into practice is worth the effort. Teachers with more confidence in their abilities and expertise may believe that the reform being proposed cannot attain the intended goal. They may reject the pedagogical theory given to justify the policy, or believe that the resources will not be available on time or simply believe that the policy cannot be made to work with their pupils (Adams 1983; Brooke 1980; Lillis 1985). Also, often teachers conclude that the reform will mean more work without additional compensation. Simply put, this means that there will be new learning required without any incentives and no more than minimal in-service instruction. This often results in the teacher's workload increasing since new reforms have a tendency to add new responsibilities without removing old ones (Kolawole 1980; Lillis 1985). If teachers are persuaded that the new policies are an improvement on the old, they may be willing to make the sacrifices demanded of them but usually a serious attempt to persuade teachers is not made.

Another reason for resistance to innovation relates to status concerns of teachers, and particularly of rural teachers. They tend to resist any policy that requires them to literally dirty their hands, obvious examples being various attempts to introduce practical, work-related activities into the curriculum or to set time to work on a farm (Lillis & Hogan 1983; Ndongko 1980; Saunders & Vuilliamy 1983). The teacher derives much of his social status and self-image from his identification with the academic curriculum and from his role in preparing the youth to seek positions in the modern sector. Therefore, to challenge these associations is to invite resistance and non-compliance.

A third set of reasons that teachers resist innovations relates to their positions in their respective communities. The teacher may have specific preferences and sometimes finds him/herself caught in the middle between a ministry promoting major reform and a community that does not approve. Teachers normally live in the communities in which they teach and tend to consider local preferences "rational" when conflicts arise (Bude 1982; Sjostrom & Sjostrom 1983). Exceptions probably occur when teachers see their personal interests as furthered by the ministry's position rather than the local community's. Such exceptions seem infrequent (also see section 2.2.3).

The client population

No type of educational planning will succeed unless it is based upon the aspirations and expectations of the majority of the population or provides incentive structures that will allow these aspirations to be modified to accord with national goals (Foster 1975:375). There can be no stronger statement of the potential impact of the client population on the implementation of education policies. The implementation stage in the policy process is often marked by the continuation of earlier struggles over the content of policy. Often client populations are denied input during policy formulation and hence compensate by concentrating their energies on transforming policies while efforts are being made to put them into effect (Kay 1978; Samoff 1983; Grindle 1981). Local communities can put pressure on politicians or education ministries and this can result in modifications to the policy or they can join forces with teachers or district officials in a campaign to neutralise a policy that has not been accepted.

The literature points to two sets of observations, which relate to the success of such tactics. First, the activity of client populations is unlikely to prevent implementation of a policy than it is to transform the policy that is implemented. Joel Samoff, in a study of educational reform in Tanzania, best summarises this pattern:

It is important to note here that most often, where educational reform efforts have not reached their stated goals, they have more often been diverted than blocked. That is, in a situation where a progressive leadership for the most part controls the terms of political discourse, and where there is little outspoken opposition to major policy directives, resistance to change takes the form of deflection. New policies are converted into mechanisms to maintain older ways (Samoff 1983:63).

The second set of observations concerns the sources of opposition to policy. Different kinds of policy are vulnerable to different kinds of opposition. Policies concerning the number of schools or procedures for school finance can perhaps only be derailed by organised resistance that has the support of local institutions. On the other hand, if such policies gain the support of the local chief or the school governing bodies then resistance can be futile (Adams & Chen 1981; Lungu 1982). Also, attempts to introduce new pedagogical practices in African schools often founder when confronted with students who are neither inquisitive nor assertive and who are often malnourished (Brooke 1980). Parents in much of Sub-Saharan Africa can still resort to what may be considered as the most effective weapon

when presented with unacceptable education policies: they keep their children out of school (Stock 1985; Mutuhaba 1974).

Putting policy into practice, especially at classroom level is a highly complex process. In the next section, I shall provide some explanations given in the literature for the mismatch between policy and teacher practice.

2.2.3 The open and closed mind: education policy and teacher practice

Policy expectations of educators, as outlined in policies, are neat, defined and orderly; in practice they are social, negotiated and dynamic. Policy suggests uniformity; but in practice, where teachers are expected to perform the same functions, there will be marked differences in the ways in which these will be executed. Simply put, local practice is the site where teachers determine what policy means for their work. According to Spillane et al (1999) teachers

Respond to the ideas they construe from policy, rather than some uniform, fixed vision of policy. In this view, relations between policy and practice are not uni-directional: while policy may shape practice, practice in turn may shape policy in that it influences what local teachers make of policy-makers' proposals.

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

Implementers are unlikely to support policies that they perceive as contrary to their own self-interest (McDonnell 1994). This is clearly documented in Prestine and McGreal's (1997) study, where an outside organisation insisted that teachers implement authentic assessment. Authentic assessment requires more time than traditional assessment does and no one proposed raising the teachers' salaries or even reducing the class size. Not

surprisingly, Prestine and McGreal found that teachers were sceptical of the value of the new policy and that “both across and within these schools, authentic assessment never achieved anything close to systemic implementation” (p390).

The teacher’s own value system impacts on the effectiveness with which s/he plays certain roles. There is a gap between what educator’s are able to do, what they believe they should do and what they actually do. For example, the policy position might be to encourage critical and creative thinking whilst in practice it may be such that critical and creative thinking is not valued in communities that place a premium on “culturally agreed” values and social consensus.

Educators are likely to oppose implementing policies that conflict with their basic professional values (McDonnell 1994). Grace (1995) describes a situation in the United Kingdom in the 1980s when government reforms changed the roles of principals and teachers. Prior to these reforms principals were involved with pedagogical and moral leadership in their schools. The new policies required them to work as managers in a competitive market environment, publicising their school results on examinations based on a new national curriculum. Some principals made this transition easily, others experienced difficulty as they had to deal with the contradiction of their own understanding of their profession and the demands of the new policies. A few resisted openly by voicing their disapproval and ignoring some aspects of the reforms. The British experience demonstrates that many educators are deeply attached to professional values and are unwilling to surrender them lightly. Such value conflicts, whether recognised or not, are the root of many incomplete or failed implementations. What policy shapers see as ideal, teachers may see as unreasonable (Rousmaniere 1997:335), and voicing such concerns about new policies may be conceptualised as disloyalty (Reay 1998:181). Hargreaves (1998:560) argues that “another misconception about emotions is that they are somehow separate from reasoning”, and cautions, “consistently dispassionate educators are highly dysfunctional ones”.

Weimer and Vining (1992) argue that three responses are possible when asked to implement a policy with which one disagrees: firstly, exit (leave the organisation), secondly, voice (speaking up about problems), and thirdly, disloyalty (quietly or openly failing to conform to policy). A single individual may combine these three approaches.

Usually speaking about the problems is the first step, and if this fails s/he may exit the system (if the value conflict is too intense). If exit is not a feasible option, the individual may choose among the various forms of disloyalty. The individual may involve others in what is known as *token compliance* (Bardach 1977) by streamlining activities and completing only certain tasks. Another approach may be *delayed compliance* (Bardach 1977) where individuals participating in the project are given extra time to complete a task that they could have completed in a specified time.

The potential conflict between policy and practice does not only arise from differences in values, but also from meanings of concepts being subject to different interpretations – terms do not speak for themselves as policy may assume. How the policy texts are conceived and understood depends on the frame of reference, personal assumptions and presuppositions, along with prior knowledge construction within the different contexts. Bowe et al. (1992:22) elaborate on this, emphasising that:

Practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers; they come from histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have vested interests in the meaning of policy. Policies will be interpreted differently as the histories, experiences, values, purposes and interests which make up the arena differ. The simple point is that policy writers cannot control the meanings of their texts. Part of their texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous, etc.

The school context also has a profound influence on the way in which teachers make sense of, prioritise and practice policy (Fullan 1991; Fullan & Pomfret 1977; Hargreaves 1994, 1998; Hopkins, Ainscow & West 1994; West 2000; Stoll & Fink 1994). To ignore context is to ignore the very elements that make policy implementation a “problem” and contribute to the highly variable local responses that trouble policymakers (McLaughlin 1998). Such contexts will include school ethos, resources, management styles as well as the nature and level of community involvement. Clearly, schools that depict a sense of purpose, discipline and respect, influence the way in which teachers will be implementing policies. The availability of resources (or the lack of them) has clear implications for the possibilities and opportunities for teaching and learning. Obviously, lack of resources will place constraints on the teacher, and in the process some teaching and learning possibilities will either be outrightly eliminated or largely hampered. For instance, crowded/spacious classes in some

schools or availability/lack of a laboratory in others imply a form of pedagogy: whole class teaching or group work; teacher demonstration or individual participation/instruction.

Management structures and styles will also influence the way in which teachers will implement policy at classroom level. Further, the nature and level of community involvement either constrains or compliments the teachers' roles, and therefore policy implementation (Harley, Bertram, & Mattson 1999). For example, a teacher who believes in corporal punishment and who is working in a community that also supports it, will practice it unreservedly. Conversely, teachers who do not believe in corporal punishment but work in a community that embrace it will be labelled ineffective and suffer identity conflict. While many policies make reference to community and stakeholder participation, it can be argued that these policies do not accommodate the diversity of contexts and value systems that such participation will invite.

Many teachers are part of a learning community. Teachers who are members of a learning community share aspects of their own and others' practices, use different forms of teaching technology and participate in different types of social relationships than do teachers teaching in other professional community settings. Members are drawn together to discover new knowledge and understandings through social means. Learning communities when challenged with change are forced to rethink existing routines and learn when and how to use new practices by rigorously debating issues among themselves. Learning communities also review policies for compatibility with the shared understandings of members and this buffers members from negative conditions existing in the larger context. A common goal for such communities is enhanced student learning. I cannot agree more with (McLaughlin 1998) who states that the answer to the question: Why are policies not implemented as planned? resides in the teacher-learning community.

What this amounts to then is that a teacher's reaction to a policy will be determined by whether his/her professional community has embraced, ignored, rejected or undermined the goals advanced by the policy. Thus teachers' professional communities have the power to transform policy intentions, for better or for worse.

Since there are multiple teachers' professional communities, policy will pass through and be interpreted by multiple communities complicating and amplifying opportunities for a

“policy effect” (McLaughlin 1998). These communities operate at different levels, for example, district, school and department, and all will exert a different influence on teachers’ conceptions of practice. When professional communities accept policy goals these are carried easily into classrooms compared with when policy goals are contested. Superficial change, if any at all, may be expected at classroom level in cases where teachers do not form part of learning communities. According to McLaughlin (1998), the connection between policy and practice ultimately will be made or missed in teachers’ professional communities.

The foregoing discussion suggests that policies inherently contain internal contradictions and tensions. Therefore, the underlying assumptions of policy, the social and historic context and the extent of compatibility of policy with teachers’ existing beliefs, commitments and practices may influence the policy process, both in the context of policy production and the context of policy practice.

Teachers are rarely involved with implementing just one innovation at a time. A school can be undergoing a number of change cycles at a time. This places stress on the organisational capacity of the school and the confidence of those leading the change process. This is the subject of discussion in the next section.

2.2.4 Implementing multiple innovations

In the early stages of any school improvement effort, the process of initiation, implementation and institutionalisation will be taking place on at least two levels. Firstly, at the classroom level, where teachers will be involved in putting into practice a change in curriculum and teaching and, secondly, the school level, which is concerned with capacity building. As soon as the school has developed the “capacity to change” then successive cycles of change become easier (Ainscow & Hopkins 1992; Hopkins 2001a, 2001b). If a school is not well attuned to change, greater effort must be given initially to building capacity and the amount of classroom change should also be limited. Once the capacity is in place in the school then managing multiple cycles of innovation becomes both possible and desirable (Hopkins 1990, 1996, 2001a, 2001b).

A second issue raised by the implementation analysis, is the skills required of change agents in the school context. For a policy to have the desired effects the implementers of the policy must have certain skills. Hopkins (2001b), in a review of the research, suggests the following abilities to be most important:

- (a) to generate trust;
- (b) to understand and diagnose the condition of the school's organisation;
- (c) to plan for the medium term and to gauge the holistic picture;
- (d) to work constructively and productively in groups;
- (e) to access the technical resources needed and to advise on research, good practice and specifications of teaching and learning;
- (f) to encourage people and give them the confidence to continue; and,
- (g) to be able to deal with the complexity of change bearing in mind that rational approaches will not work in the current climate.

South African schools are being flooded with new educational policies and teachers are expected to change their roles and behaviours at an alarmingly rapid pace leaving teacher morale at an all-time low. New policies have to be implemented, in most cases, before the successful implementation of previous policies. Schools do not have the luxury of limiting the amount of change that they want to embark on. I therefore argue that most schools have not yet developed the "capacity to change", therefore successive cycles of change become more difficult and probably impossible in most cases.

Section Three

2.3.1 A theoretical perspective on policy implementation

While the many implementation studies have been highly informative, their contributions have been limited by the absence of a theoretical perspective. In this section I highlight the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) theoretical perspective for policy implementation. In their theoretical framework, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) give primary attention to the literature on organisational change and control in developing a framework. They argue that policies are classified according to two distinguishing characteristics, that is, the amount of change involved and the extent to which there is goal consensus between the participants in

the implementation process. Incremental changes are more likely to engender a positive response than will drastic ones (Van Meter & Van Horn 1975; Pressman & Wildavsky 1973).

Several factors affect goal consensus – and thus implementation. The literature finds support for the following arguments (Gross et al 1971). Firstly, participation leads to higher staff morale and high staff morale is necessary for successful implementation; secondly, participation leads to greater commitment, and high degree of commitment is required for effecting change; thirdly, participation leads to greater clarity about an innovation, and clarity is necessary for implementation; fourthly, beginning with the postulate of basic resistance to change, the argument is that participation will reduce initial resistance and thereby facilitate successful implementation; and fifthly, subordinates will tend to resist any innovation that they are expected to implement if it is initiated solely by their superordinates.

The combination of the two factors described above produce a typology of policies as reflected in figure 2.1.

Using this, they suggest that implementation will be most successful where only marginal change is required and goal consensus is high. Conversely, where major change is mandated and goal consensus is low, the prospects for effective implementation will be most doubtful. Similarly, major change/high consensus policies will be implemented more effectively than policies involving minor change and low consensus expecting that goal consensus will have a greater effect on the policy implementation process than will the element of change.

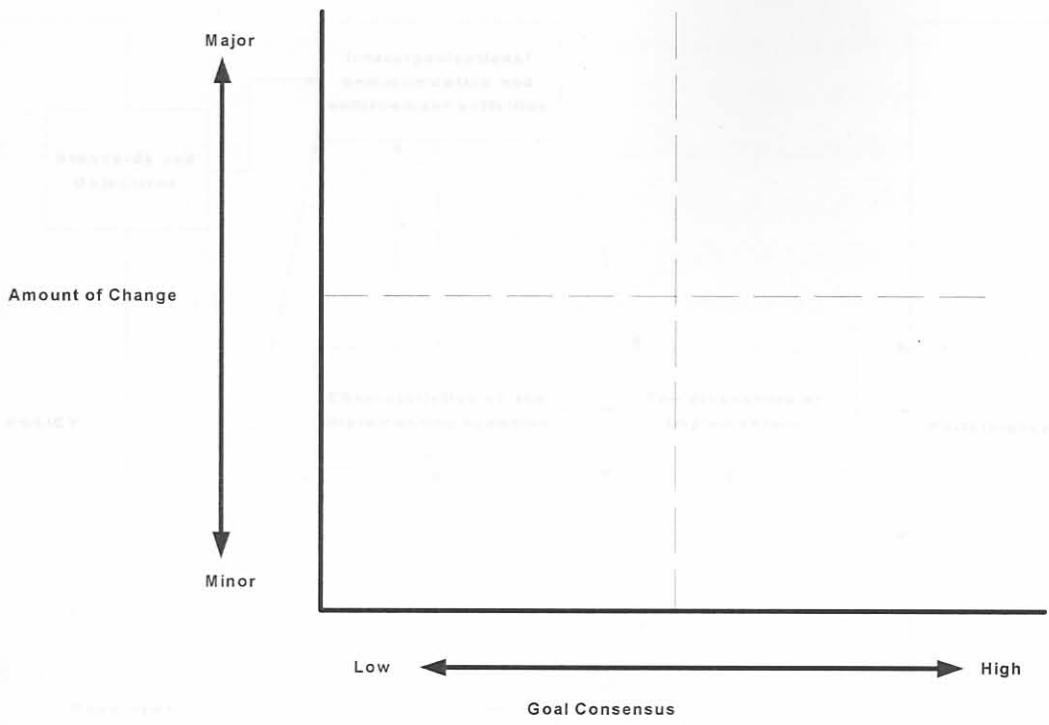


Figure 2.1: Dimension of policy affecting implementation (Van Meter & Van Horn 1975).

Figure 2.2: A model of the policy implementation process (van Meter & Van Horn 1975)

Using the theoretical perspective explained above, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) present a basic model (depicted in figure 2.2.) that posits six variables, which shape the linkage between policy and performance. The model not only specifies the relationships between the independent variables and the ultimate dependent variables of interest, but also makes explicit the relationships among the independent variables.

Furthermore, it adds to the description of the policy or implementation process as a conceptual guide in research by providing suggestive hypotheses. This model is relatively complex and I believe that an examination of its several features will lead to more cogent and explanations of policy performance.

On closer observation of the above model there is one major criticism that can be advanced. The model appears to be non-linear. As in the case of other linear models the usefulness and applicability of the model is often debated.

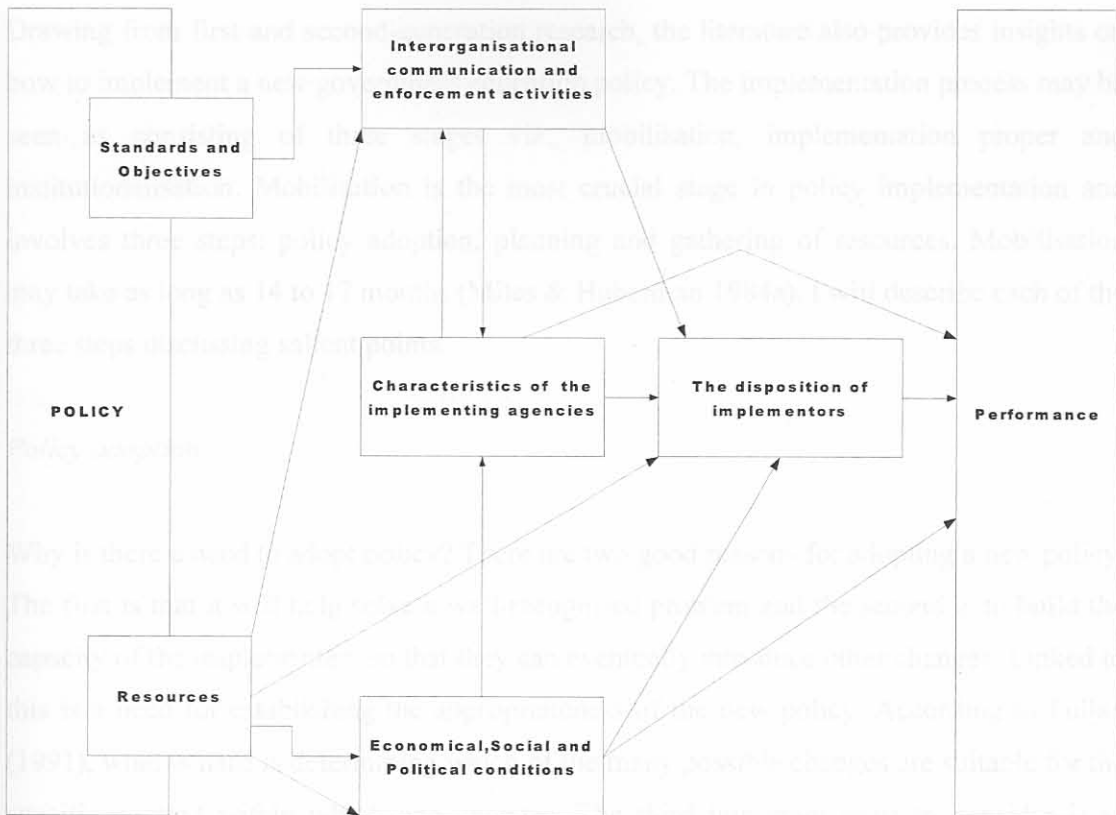


Figure 2.2: A model of the policy implementation process (Van Meter & Van Horn 1975)

The model advanced here has several noteworthy features. A positive contribution of the model is that it delineates several factors that shape the linkage between policy and performance and specifies the relationship between these independent variables. Furthermore, it aids in the description of the policy implementation process and serves as a guide in research by generating suggestive hypotheses. This model is relatively complex and I believe that an examination of its several linkages will lead to more systematic explanations of policy performance.

On closer observation of the above model there is one major criticism that can be levelled. The model appears to be too linear. As in the case of other linear models the usability and applicability of the model is often debated.

2.3.2 Insights from the literature on how to implement a new government policy

Drawing from first and second-generation research, the literature also provides insights on how to implement a new government education policy. The implementation process may be seen as consisting of three stages viz., mobilisation, implementation proper and institutionalisation. Mobilisation is the most crucial stage in policy implementation and involves three steps: policy adoption, planning and gathering of resources. Mobilisation may take as long as 14 to 17 months (Miles & Huberman 1984a). I will describe each of the three steps discussing salient points.

Policy adoption

Why is there a need to adopt policy? There are two good reasons for adopting a new policy. The first is that it will help solve a well-recognised problem and the second is to build the capacity of the implementers so that they can eventually introduce other changes. Linked to this is a need for establishing the appropriateness of the new policy. According to Fullan (1991), what is hard is determining which of the many possible changes are suitable for the specific context within which one operates. The third important issue to consider is to assess the level of support that the proposed policy enjoys (Berman & McLaughlin 1978; Fullan 1991). The adoption process should include ongoing dialogue with all the individuals who will be involved in the implementation process. Lack of involvement of the major implementers in the adoption of policy is a key reason for resistance. Some implementers may have to be persuaded whilst others will suggest modifications to the change proposed. Although leaders must be careful not to midgetise the policy change (Miles & Huberman 1984a), all policy implementation involves some mutual adaptation between the policy and the setting (McLaughlin 1998). Such negotiations are important to the adoption process. The onus is on the leaders at this stage to listen carefully to what other stakeholders say. As Fullan (1991) observes

Educational change is a process of coming to grips with the multiple realities of people, who are the main participants in implementing change. The leader who presupposes what the change should be and acts in ways that preclude others' realities is bound to fail (p95).

On the other hand, a leader who is planning to resist a policy must be clear as to whether the policy is a symbolic one or not. Symbolic policies are adopted for purely political rather than substantive reasons (Fullan 1991) and implementation almost always fails. Even though symbolic policies are adopted it does not mean that anyone cares much about their implementation which is often pro forma – poorly planned, underfunded and understaffed (Fowler 2000). However, if the new policy was motivated by substantive reasons, then resistance becomes a serious issue. Motives for resistance include commitment to philosophical, professional or religious principles, especially those that directly relates to the interest of the learners. Issues of self-interest must be carefully analysed to determine if a bona fide conflict of interest exists and if the best interests of learners do not outweigh one's personal self-interest.

Will resistance force the abandonment or major amendment of a policy? This is possible. An example is one provided by Miles and Huberman (1984a) who write of a principal who prevented the implementation of a pedagogically unsound curriculum change in his school. They did not consider the principal's actions wrong and found that although the implementation failed, the principal was successful in protecting his school from a policy disaster. In most instances, opposition changes nothing, the power balance is such that implementation rolls right over all resistance (Grace 1995).

Only after the proposed policy change has gone through this transformative process should leaders move to adopt it officially.

Planning

McGinn (1979) asserts that "the model of planning employed" has a direct connection with project performance. Once policy has been adopted the leader must then plan for implementation but must be cautious not to overplan (Fullan 1991, Louis & Miles 1990). Louis and Miles (1990) refer to this as *evolutionary planning* which means that there is a plan for the first weeks of implementation and as the project evolves this plan should be revised and adapted to meet the changed circumstances. Representatives of key stakeholder groups should be involved in the planning process. Planning by forward mapping allows for the identification of needs ahead of time (Weimer & Vining 1992). On the other hand, with *rational planning* implementation is expected to proceed as the plan directs but such

theories of planned change “that move through predictable stages of implementation or ‘growth’ are poorly suited to schools where unexpected twists and turns are the norm rather than the exception in the ways they operate” (Hargreaves 1998). There can therefore be no blueprints for change (Fullan 1991).

Attention must also be given to restructuring and reculturing for the implementation process. Restructuring involves changing behaviours, roles and relationships by changing organisational structures. Elmore (1995) offers three reasons why more attention is focussed on changing of structures. Let us turn our attention to these. Firstly, changing a highly visible fixture in a school signals that something important is happening. Disrupting established patterns means that the reformers are serious about change. Structural change has high symbolic value. Secondly, reformers like to change structure because they are easier than other candidates of change. It is easier to change the timetable in schools than it is to get rid of teachers and replace them with others. Thirdly, reformers like to change structures because they believe that structures exert a strong influence over their work and that structural changes can remove barriers to learning for students and encourage alternative approaches to teaching.

Whilst restructuring has been acknowledged as being important I want to argue that restructuring has to be balanced with reculturing. Reculturing is the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms. For systematic reform it involves building new conceptions about instruction ... and new forms of professionalism for teachers” (Fullan 1996). Reculturing also requires schools to deal with the micropolitical aspects that influence the institution (Ball 1987).

Gathering of resources

The third step of mobilising for policy implementation is gathering resources. A frequent cause of implementation failure is the lack of or unwise allocation of resources (Fullan 1991; Louis & Miles 1990; Miles & Huberman 1984a; Reynolds & Teedlie 2000). Money is an important resource and the leader must be sure that there is sufficient funding for the implementation process. Time is another crucial resource (Fullan 1991; Louis & Miles 1990; Prestine & McGreal 1997; Reynolds & Teedlie 2000). Sufficient personnel are important to achieve even a modest change. According to Louis and Miles (1990) there is

also a need for an individual to assume major responsibility for the project. The tasks of such a person would involve monitoring progress, handling communication and taking the initiative to solve problems. Ensuring that there is sufficient space is also important. Such constraints can take many forms: not enough classrooms, too small classrooms or no space at all. Finally, policy changes are dependent on the availability of machines and materials, for example, computers, hands-on science curricula and chemicals for experiments.

The next stage is the implementation stage. There are two stages in the implementation process viz. early implementation and late implementation.

Early implementation

The key characteristic of this stage is that the implementers will most likely feel overloaded, tired, anxious and sometimes confused. They tend to make many mistakes and have doubts about whether they will succeed. Miles and Huberman (1984a) found that adequate preparation and provision of resources in the mobilisation stage could overcome these difficulties. In-service training and other assistance throughout early implementation also helped. A negative way to assist teachers would be to respond to complaints by agreeing to downsize the magnitude of the required policy change. Such “midgetising” eliminated most of the potential headaches but also threw out most of the potential rewards (Miles & Huberman 1984a). Smooth early implementation is actually a “bad sign” (Miles & Huberman 1984a). Ultimately, there are three predictors of success: firstly, a rough start, secondly, pressure by the leaders to continue with implementation and, thirdly, ongoing assistance. A combination of both pressure and support is key to surviving early implementation.

Late implementation

In this case I will consider two scenarios, that is, late implementation in failed projects and late implementations in downsized successful projects. When policy implementation fails the implementers are usually disappointed and discouraged. Many will revert to their earlier practices – if they had abandoned them in the first place. The problem that accompanies this is that when leaders suggest new policies, they will be met with cynicism, the usual

legacy of a failed implementation (Miles & Huberman 1984a; Louis & Miles 1990; Prestine & McGreal 1997).

Midgetised implementations often enter the late implementation stage after five or six months, truly successful ones do not mature to this stage until after 18 months have elapsed (Fowler 2000). When this occurs the implementers feel comfortable with the new policy and proud of their accomplishments. They may even adapt the policy for a different student population or use some of its features in other parts of the curriculum. At this stage problems are less frequent and not as severe as in early implementation. Problems still, however, exist. Louis and Miles (1990) caution that “Implementing serious change ... is a problem-rich enterprise ... Problems of the programme itself are easiest to solve; ‘people problems’ come next; and ‘setting’ problems of structures and procedures are most difficult to solve” (p272). Problems may still exist in the late implementation stage, which need to be solved if the policy is to be successfully institutionalised.

Successful implementation is dependent on three components from beginning to end. Firstly, monitoring and feedback, secondly, ongoing assistance and, thirdly, handling problems. There has to be rigorous monitoring and feedback by principals/leaders. Presence of leaders at the site, questions about progress and words of encouragement will signal to implementers the seriousness of their efforts (McLaughlin 1987). In addition, there should be ongoing help which should be “intense, relevant to local needs, varied, and sustained” (Louis & Miles 1990). The problems that are encountered, as already stated, might be programme related, people related or setting related. Programme-related problems are easiest to solve, whereas those that are setting related are most difficult (Fowler 2000). Successful leaders are those that detect problems early, converse with implementers for possible solutions and do not look for someone to blame. Louis and Miles (1990) suggest three broad coping strategies that can be used. Technical strategies involve analysing the problem and making resources available. Political strategies involve mobilising power to force people to act in a particular way, whilst cultural strategies focus on shared values and beliefs.

The final stage is that of institutionalisation of the policy. This is the period during which an innovation is incorporated into the organisation (Hopkins 1996; Fullan & Steigelbauer 1992; Fowler 2000). A policy is only institutionalised when it becomes integrated into the

routine practices of the school or district. Leaders have to modify formal procedures of the organisation to accommodate the policy change permanently. Institutionalisation may be seen as the third phase of implementation but in practice it overlaps with late implementation and is rarely accomplished all at once, it is usually a piecemeal process.

The foregoing review foregrounds important constructs from the literature that I will use in developing a framework for the rest of the research process of this study. The key issues crystallised from this review for consideration when developing a tentative framework are as follows:

Firstly, that there are different implementation models and that each one is characterised by its unique strengths and limitations. Secondly, that the factors impacting on policy implementation are many and varied, for example, time; goal consensus; interorganisational communication and enforcement activities; characteristics of implementing agencies; resources; economic, social and political conditions; the disposition of implementers; external support etc. There may be direct or indirect relationships between these factors. Thirdly, teachers' experiences and their roles within learning communities influence implementation significantly. Fourthly, that the implementation context matters. Fifthly, institutions seldom implement one policy at a time. Those institutions that have developed a capacity to change are better able to manage new changes.

In the next and final section of the review I present a conceptual framework and accompanying propositions for analysing policy implementation within the context of a rapidly changing educational scenario.

Section Four

2.4.1 Conceptual framework

This study presents a tentative conceptual framework and a set of provisional propositions that will be tested in the course of the actual research into the understanding and implementation of an evaluation-focused policy (in this case, Whole School Evaluation). Although the final section of the dissertation does not develop a new theory it does however lay the groundwork for further empirical and theoretical work by pointing to the

intractable problems of policy implementation in fluid/transitional contexts where the policy focus (evaluation) is negatively experienced and understood in the history of the institution (the school) and where the main policy (WSE) co-exists with similar policy reforms.

Let me begin by presenting a diagram (figure 2.3.), which represents the three different evaluation policies and their focus areas. The overall expectation in the case of all three policies, which are expected to be simultaneously implemented in schools, is that they will ultimately lead to school effectiveness and school improvement.

There is usually not a direct translation, but more a negotiation, between the many policy implementation expectations on the one side, and schools and teachers on the other (Ottevanger 2001). Several factors, as has already been shown, influence implementation of a new policy (Fowler 2000; Fullan 1991, 1998; Giacquinta 1998, Dyer 1999; McLaughlin 1976, 1987, 1998; Prestine & McGreal 1997; Grace 1995; Hargreaves 1994, 1998; Hopkins et al 1994, Ainskow & Hopkins 1992; West 2000; Stoll & Fink 1994; Hopkins 2001b; Harley et al 1999; Miles & Huberman 1984a, Louis & Miles 1990; McGinn 1979; Reynolds & Teedlie 2000; Elmore 1995; Ball 1987; Weimer & Vining 1992). One of these factors concerns the characteristics of the change, that is, the need, clarity and complexity of the change. Another factor, which is especially important, is the degree to which the district and the community support the policy that is to be implemented. Furthermore, the stimulating role of the principal as well as the organisational structure of the school is of utmost importance in the implementation (Joyce & Showers 1990; Hopkins 1990, 1996, 2001b; Fullan 2001). Teachers play the central role in the implementation of the policy at the classroom level, in developed and developing countries (Montero-Sieburth 1992, McLaughlin 1994; Fullan 2001; Elmore 1995). Teacher beliefs, their views on new roles, level of training, expertise and professionalism are all important factors that influence policy implementation. Finally, there is also an important role for professional learning communities in the policy implementation process (Joyce & Showers 1988; McLaughlin 1998, Hopkins 1996, 2001b).

These factors are incorporated in a framework for policy implementation as presented in figure 2.4. below. The diagram presents implementation as the link between the intentions

of policymakers on the one hand, and the policy effects on the other. Competing policy influences, stakeholder understandings, context and professional learning communities impact directly on policy implementation, hence resulting in specific policy effects. The influence of stakeholder understandings and competing policies are of specific significance in this study and will be elaborated on in the final section of my dissertation.

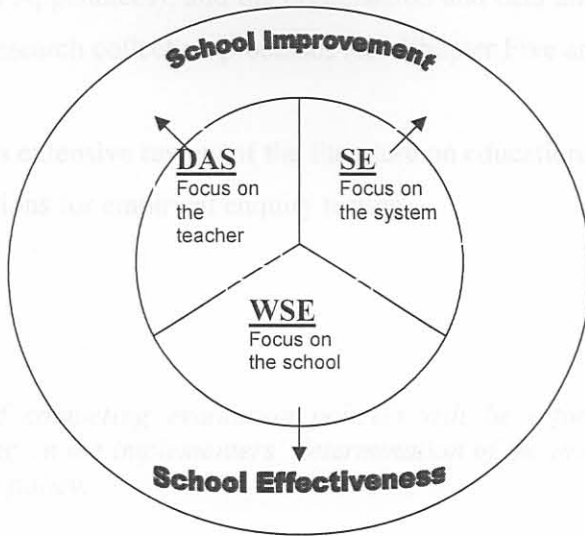


Figure 2.3: Competing policies and their influence on school improvement and effectiveness

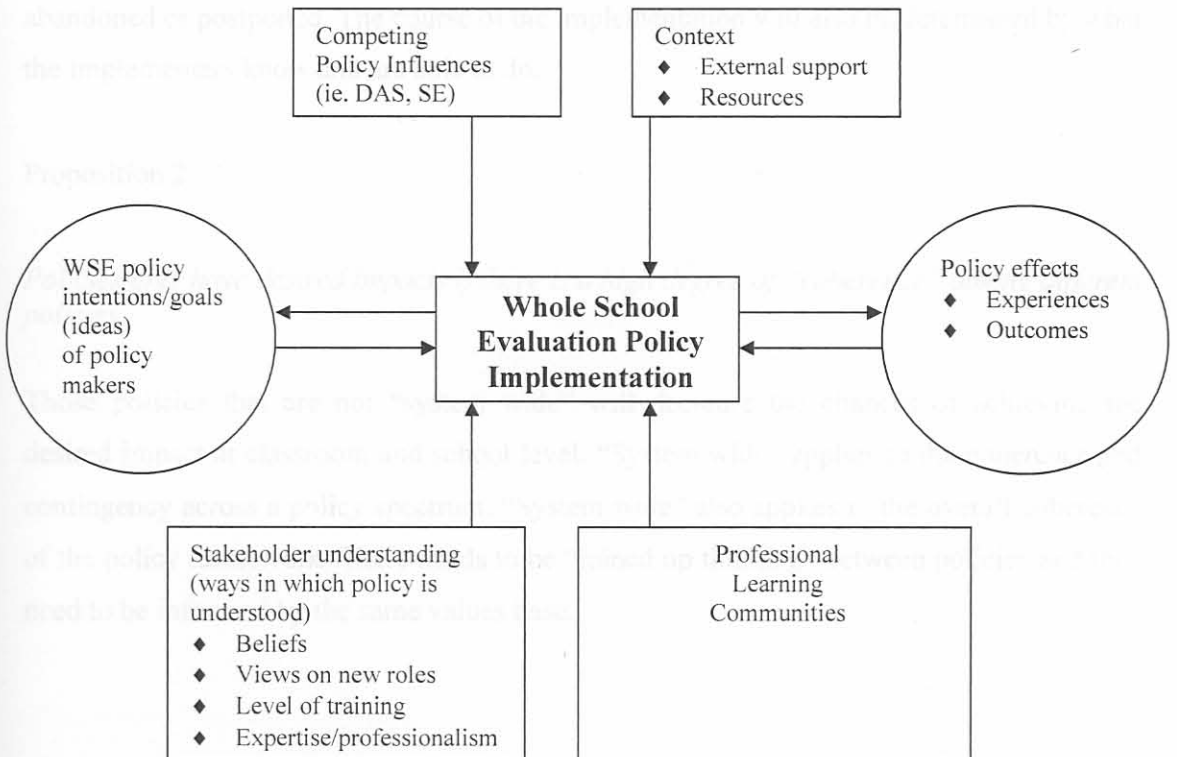


Figure 2.4: A framework for policy implementation

The presentation of this model aims to fulfil two purposes. Firstly, to serve as a synthesis of the literature reviewed in the previous sections of this chapter. Secondly, to represent the conceptual framework that guided the research study during the design of the data collection plan (see Chapter Three); design of the research instruments of this study (see Chapter Three and Appendices); and the organisation and data analysis process of the data yielded from the research collection processes (see Chapter Five and Six).

Extracted from this extensive review of the literature on educational change, I identified the following propositions for empirical enquiry testing.

Proposition 1

Implementation of competing evaluation policies will be afforded varying degrees of attention depending on the implementers' determination of the immediacy, practicality and knowledge of each policy.

When teachers experience policy overload, they tend to concentrate on those policies that they regard important for the moment. Implementation of the other policies is either abandoned or postponed. The course of the implementation will also be determined by what the implementers know and are able to do.

Proposition 2

Policies only have desired impacts if there is a high degree of "coherence" among different policies

Those policies that are not "system wide" will decrease the chances of achieving the desired impact at classroom and school level. "System wide" applies to the coherence and contingency across a policy spectrum. "System wide" also applies to the overall coherence of the policy framework. There needs to be "joined up thinking" between policies and they need to be informed by the same values base.

Proposition 3

Policies only have desired impacts if there is a high degree of “coherence” within the minds/understanding of practitioners.

There has to be to clarity and coherence at both the top and bottom of the system – at the level of policymakers and in the minds of the majority of teachers. Generally policymakers construct their own conceptions of evaluation in their minds, which is seldom different from what implementers think and are able to do. If the expectations of policymakers are not clearly communicated to the implementers of policy then such policies will remain “grand plans”.

Proposition 4

When stakeholders have negative experiences of a particular policy issue (i.e. evaluation) they remain sceptical about the value of other similar accountability/evaluation policies no matter how noble the intentions of these policies might be.

Negative experiences embedded in the minds of stakeholders are very difficult to change no matter what the new policies propose. Stakeholders may acknowledge these experiences explicitly or implicitly.

Proposition 5

The school-site conceptions of evaluation are constantly built and changed as a result of human interactions around the work of teaching and learning and running an organisation.

The principal and evaluation co-ordinators in the school are active agents in the creation of conceptions of WSE under which all teachers operate, and they may also be active agents in changing these conceptions. Teachers’ thinking is shaped by their own experiences and by experiences gleaned from others.

Proposition 6

Homogenous culture, bureaucratic responsiveness and hierarchical organisation together compose a positive response to official policy.

These are certain elements that together create a positive response to policy. Depending on the particular context, some of these elements are more pronounced than others.

Though there be madness, yet there is method¹⁴

Proposition 7

It's shall not come from conversation

The course of policy implementation is influenced both negatively and positively by variables operating within and outside the school context.

T.S. Eliot

Within the school context there are various variables that will impact directly on policy implementation. External factors also influence the policy implementation process either directly or indirectly.

2.5 Chapter summary

In the first section of this chapter I traced the historical origins of policy implementation research and outlined the key “lessons learnt” from each generation. In Section Two, I foregrounded the various factors impacting on policy implementation. The complexities and subtleties are revealed with regard to why there is seldom a mismatch between policy and teacher practice. Throughout the argument of a tenuous connection between policy and practice, a disparate context is apparent. I also provided reflections on the difficulty of managing multiple changes.

In Section Three, I presented a theoretical perspective on policy implementation and a critique of the model of Van Meter and Van Horn (1975). I concluded this section by including ideas on how to implement a new government policy. Finally, in Section Four, I provided a conceptual framework (based on constructs from the literature) and propositions for understanding policy implementation in a rapidly transforming educational landscape. The propositions will be empirically tested in the research to shed light on policy implementation in transforming contexts.

In the next chapter I turn my attention to describing the specific research methodology used to collect data around the critical research questions.

Chapter Three

Though there be madness, yet there is method¹⁴!

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

T.S. Elliot

3.1 Introduction

By way of recollection, this study set out to answer two main research questions. First, I was interested in how the various stakeholders in the school context understand WSE. This was deemed important because stakeholder understandings of the WSE policy will influence the way that policy is implemented in the school context. Second, I explored how schools implement WSE policy given the presence of other evaluation-related policies in the school environment.

I have arranged the discussion in this chapter into three sections. In Section One of this chapter, *Setting up the research design*, I provide a narrative account of how the research design of this study unfolded. I provide a brief description of case study methodology and present my reasons for choosing case study methodology as well as present the ethical considerations in conducting the research.

In Section Two, *Data collection plan*, I focus on how the research choices I made attempted to answer the two critical questions of the study. I also attempt to record the nature of doing research in a complex, unstable and rapidly changing context such as that of the post-apartheid educational terrain in South Africa. In addition, I present a description of the sources of data, the sample, the design and kinds of instruments that were used to access the data in five phases of one year: during the preparation phase for WSE; during and shortly after the self-evaluation phase; during and after the external evaluation; before and after the school development planning phase and before and after the implementation of the

¹⁴ Inspiration for title from unpublished PhD dissertation of S.Singh (2000): "Intruders in the Sacred Grove of Science"? A Critical Analysis of Women Academics Participation in Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

school development plan. Finally, I provide details of the strategy employed to answer each of the critical questions as well as the methods employed to enhance the validity of my data.

In Section Three, *Analysing the data*, I present decisions made about how the textual as well as statistical data was analysed and presented.

Section One

3.1.1 Setting up the research design

The changes and adaptations in the research process were due mainly to various contextual factors that emerged during the setting up of the research process and specifically the execution of the data collection and analysis. This is different from an “emergent design” methodology of research where there is a deliberate decision to allow the process of the research methodology to unfold in the course of doing the research (Vithal 1998). Before entering the field, I had already formulated the kind of key questions and research strategies that I intended using in my study. I had also commenced with an already clearly formulated plan for data collection. Nevertheless, I was open to the possibility of being influenced by the specifics of enacting the research design.

My research plan to collect data in the Gauteng¹⁵ province (the province I currently reside in) changed for the following reasons: The sampled schools in the Gauteng area were confined only to the two nodal areas¹⁶, that is, Alexandra and Kathlohong. These education areas have been identified by the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, in conjunction with the Members of Executive Council for Education for intersectoral, integrated, sustained and focused development. These two areas are part of the Government’s overall Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS) and Urban Renewal Strategy (URS). Very low literacy levels, high unemployment, exceptionally low matric pass rates and lack of infrastructure for basic teaching and learning to occur characterise both these areas. According to the Education Atlas of South Africa (Bot et al 2000), School Effectiveness District Profiles (DoE 2001c) and the School Register of Needs Survey (DoE 2000d), 10 percent of the population in the Alexandra district is illiterate and a staggering

¹⁵ One of nine provinces in South Africa

43 percent of the population is unemployed. About 65 percent of the population have water supply in their own dwellings, 12 percent depend on public taps and the remaining population still depend on boreholes and natural sources. A large percentage (86%) of the population have flush toilets, approximately 7,1 percent depend on pit latrines, 4,42 percent still depend on bucket latrines and 1,50 percent have no facilities. This situation almost mirrors the picture in Katlohong, that is, 12 percent of the population is illiterate and 47 percent of the population is unemployed. About 68 percent have water supply in their own dwellings, 13 percent depend on public taps and the remaining population depends on boreholes, tankers and natural sources. As regards sanitation in the district, 83,57 percent of the population have flush toilets, 10,44 percent have pit latrines, 1,01 percent have bucket latrines and a significant percentage (5%) have no sanitation facilities.

One of the basic criteria in my research plan was that the school selected for my research had to be enthusiastic and willing to implement the policy as I wished to cancel out resistance to policy as a reason for failed/poor implementation. It was highly unlikely to find a willing school in either Alexandra or Kathlohong given the staggering statistics I have cited above. Unsurprisingly, all the officials that I had interviewed with regard to the choice of a suitable school were reluctant to recommend any one school within the two nodal areas for the purposes of my research, citing that schools in the Katlohong and Alexandra areas were resistant to the WSE policy. Several of the officials suggested that, in view of the fact that enthusiasm to implement the policy was one of the key criteria for selection of my case study school, I therefore target a school outside the nodal areas, even if it meant conducting the research in another province. Many of the officials were of the opinion that these schools would definitely be more willing and enthusiastic to implement the WSE policy as they generally produced better matric results and are situated in more affluent areas. Furthermore, at the time of data collection, teachers in Gauteng (many of whom belong to the South African Democratic Teachers Union), were resisting the entry of evaluators into schools. It was thus desirable to use a school within the North West province since this was the only other province that was forging ahead with the implementation of WSE. I was informed that two secondary schools in the North West were selected by the National Ministry for the first phase of WSE. I decided to pursue this option of conducting the research in the North West province.

¹⁶ Nodal areas are characterised by low literacy levels, high unemployment and high poverty.

3.1.2 The case study approach

Qualitative research, in particular the case study method, which concerns itself with the natural context in which the research is conducted, was used to gauge how stakeholders understand and implement the WSE policy. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981:124) “human behaviour unlike that of physical objects cannot be understood without reference to meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities”. My decision to choose a research design such as qualitative case study depended on consideration of the fact that I was investigating questions which are appropriate for case study (Yin 1994) as well as the fact that my desired end product was to be a holistic, intensive description and interpretation of how stakeholders understand and enact WSE policy in the school context. I was precisely interested in insight and discovery. This is referred to as “interpretation in context” (Cronbach 1980). A fourth and probably deciding factor is that I identified a “bounded system” as the focus of the investigation. By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (“the case”), the case study approach aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon. Yin (1994) observes that case study design is particularly suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from their context.

My rationale for qualitative case study methodology is also linked to what Merriam (1988:20-21) describes as personal characteristics of this type of research. She refers to personal, people skills such as tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity, sound communication skills, empathy and good listening skills as essential for qualitative research. I have as a teacher, researcher and policymaker worked towards refining and developing my skills in these areas in order to pursue this kind of study as an instrument of discovery.

Perhaps at this stage it would be congruent with this discussion to also consider definitions of case study advanced by other writers. Walker (1983) describes case study methodology as “the science of the singular,” whilst Cohen and Manion (1994:106-107) describe the aim of case study as being:

To probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with the view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which the unit belongs.

According to Merriam (1988), the four characteristics, which are essential properties of a qualitative case study, are particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive. Particularistic means that the case study focuses on a particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon; whilst descriptive means that the end product is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study. It also means, “interpreting the meaning of demographic and descriptive data in terms of cultural norms and mores, community values, deep-seated attitudes and notions, and the like” (Guba & Lincoln 1981:119). Heuristic means that the case study illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study thereby bringing about the discovery of new meaning, extending the reader’s experience and confirming what is already known. Inductive means that, for the most part, case studies rely on inductive reasoning. This simply means that generalisations, concepts, or hypotheses emerge from an examination of data, which is grounded in the context. My research study on exploring and elucidating stakeholder understandings and implementation of WSE policy in the school context is characteristic of these four properties.

Returning to reasons for my choice of research design – this was also prompted by the fact that case study research has several advantages. Case study data is “strong in reality” but may be difficult to organise. Case study allows for generalisations either about an instance or from an instance to a class as well as recognises social situations and can represent conflicts between viewpoints held by participants and offer support to alternative interpretations. The data may form an archive of descriptive material, which can be interpreted at a later stage. Insights from case studies may be directly interpreted and put to use. The research data may be presented in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research reports. A wide variety of methods of gathering data can be used. Case study also offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its reader’s experience. Case study plays an important role in advancing a field’s knowledge base.

Yin and Stake (1995) claims that knowledge learned from case study is different from other research knowledge in four important ways. Case study knowledge is:

- more concrete – resonates with our own experience because it is more vivid, concrete and sensory than abstract.
- more contextual – our experiences are rooted in context, as is knowledge in case studies.

- more developed by reader interpretation – readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding, which lead to generalisations when new data for the case are added to old data.
- based more on reference populations determined by the reader.

Notwithstanding all the advantages of case study research, the drawbacks should also be acknowledged. There is difficulty of generalising from a single case especially when the researcher uses small and unrepresentative samples; also with the issue of reliability and validity. For case studies involving detailed descriptions time and money may be a constraint. Furthermore, the product may be too detailed, too lengthy for policymakers and educators to read. The researcher may also oversimplify or exaggerate the situation leaving the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs. The reader may be seduced into thinking that the case study is an account of the whole when it is but a part of the whole. The case study is limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher who has to rely on his/her own instincts throughout the research. Finally, the researcher could select from the data anything he/she wished to illustrate (problem of ethics).

My role as primary instrument played an important part in terms of interacting with participants' backgrounds, values and biases that may affect the data. Negotiating my role as researcher was thus a challenging one. Being aware that human interaction is intricate and complex, I had to have a great deal of self-awareness when communicating with respondents. This self-awareness included my emotional reactions, thoughts and habitual responses. I aimed for establishing feelings of trust, ease of communication and maintenance of a sensitive and conducive rapport with the various stakeholders.

Merriam (1988:23) describes empathy as "the foundation of rapport". Empathy and openness was maintained with the different stakeholders during the interviews. I attempted to understand "the other" as if I was "the other", considering that I had also been a teacher for several years. I needed to understand the factual content of what was said in addition to the emotional undertones. I also reflected on my own thoughts and feelings throughout the study so that I would be unlikely to bring distortion to the interviews.

Throughout the research I was aware of my personal limitations as researcher, which could influence my study. Therefore, my personal assumptions, viewpoints, biases and beliefs were available to the various respondents.

By using qualitative case study research I attempted to understand how all the parts work together to form a whole. The assumption here is that there are multiple realities – that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring. Beliefs rather than facts form the basis of perception (Merriam 1988:17). The aim of case study as Bromley (1986:38) argues “is not to find the ‘correct’ or ‘true’ interpretation of the facts, but rather to eliminate erroneous conclusions so that one is left with the best possible, the most compelling interpretation”.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) support this notion when they suggest that the aim of the naturalist inquirer is not to present a single inquiry asserting itself as the “truth”. Naturalist inquirers should aim to discover the multiple realities that co-exist within any research context. My role as researcher is to present this messiness after having been thoroughly immersed in the thickness of the context. The respondents of the research should judge the value of the research itself to gauge whether their realities have been accurately represented. Therefore, the trustworthiness of the research derives out of whether the respondents find the data credible rather than whether the data proclaims an eternal truth.

3.1.3 Ethical considerations

Having conducted the research with a broad array of stakeholders it was of paramount importance that I respect the rights, privacy, dignity and sensitivities of the research population and also the integrity of the institution i.e. *Wagpos* High. The decision to retain the original name of the school was taken after much deliberation and discussion with the school. Pseudonyms were used in cases where individuals were not comfortable with the use of their names. I reported my findings in sufficient detail to relevant stakeholders, consciously refraining from withholding or selectively communicating my findings.

Section Two: Data Collection Plan

3.2.1 Access and acceptance

In November 2001, whilst I was still in the DoE, I received documentation relating to the North West Provincial Department's plan for WSE scheduled for April 2002. In March 2002, by which time I was already employed in the Department of Science and Technology, I received a composite list of the schools in the various districts where WSE was to take place. It was apparent from the documentation that a maximum of two schools was being targeted in the chosen districts. I clarified the selection criteria for my case study school with provincial and district officials before I sought their opinions on a suitable choice of school for the research. Given the background that I have already sketched the decision was unanimous that I consult with *Wagpos* High School in the Brits district.

I was concerned about whether I would be easily accepted into *Wagpos* High, which I believed, from the name alone, to be a conservative Afrikaner and predominantly white school. However, negotiating my role as researcher within the school did not prove to be as difficult as I anticipated. I contacted the principal of the school, to inform him that both the district and provincial offices had highly recommended *Wagpos* High for the research study. I fortunately obtained verbal consent from him as well as his pledge to provide all the support and assistance that I required for the study. Thereafter it was necessary to obtain official permission from the North West Provincial Department of Education. This was arranged through a fellow PhD student who occupies a senior position at the provincial office. If normal channels of protocol had to be followed I expect that this process would have taken at least three to five months. Letters containing details about the topic I was researching, as well as an undertaking to disseminate the findings on completion of the study, were faxed both to the Brits District Office and to *Wagpos* High (Appendix A). In my subsequent correspondence with the principal he indicated to me that the staff had consented to participate in the research and were willing to provide insights into their understanding and implementation of the WSE policy. I am not sure whether my confession to the principal about my no longer being with the National Ministry made him more comfortable and willing to allow me to conduct the research study at *Wagpos* High.

I soon came to realise that my two years of having worked at the National Ministry of Education had distinct advantages when it came to arranging interviews with national officials. Due to my familiarity with the national officials, all interview arrangements except one, proceeded smoothly. The exception was the interview with the Chief Director of Quality Assurance at the National Ministry, who refused to participate in the research study by politely suggesting to me that I should rather investigate the WSE process retrospectively, that is, ten years after implementation since, according to her, there were too many problems with WSE at that time. The other national officials who were directly involved with the rollout of quality assurance initiatives, that is, the Acting Director and later the newly appointed Director, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Chief Education Specialists (in fact all of the WSE Directorate) as well as the Director (Systemic Evaluation) were interviewed.

Interviews with the provincial co-ordinator, evaluation team and union officials¹⁷ were very easily arranged. However, negotiating interviews with the district officials and the circuit manager proved to be a little more challenging as the officials were often out of office visiting schools in the district.

3.2.2 Collecting data in disruptive contexts

One of the characteristics of doing research is that the researcher is often expected to fulfil several roles simultaneously. On certain days I found it impossible to get away from my obligations at work and sometimes found myself observing lessons or attending a meeting at school for a few hours in the day. The “luxury” of being able to focus exclusively on my research project independent of other work commitments was rarely afforded.

My data collection plans were disrupted and had to be rescheduled due to strong resistance from the teacher union, SADTU, to the implementation of the WSE policy. Valero and Vithal (1998) suggest that “disruptions to carefully conceived plans” may take on more dramatic alterations within a rapidly changing context. They suggest that “disruptions to carefully conceived plans are the norm rather than exception” (p9) in research contexts that

¹⁷ I had known many of them as a result of my strong union activities whilst I was a teacher in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education.

are undergoing fundamental transformations of their educational, social and economic contexts. For example:

- Researchers may be simply unable to gain access to schools within which research was intended to be conducted. This may be as a result of class boycotts, student or teacher strikes, unscheduled closing of schools owing to political or social problems. The school context is merely a microcosm of wider social changes, and therefore, a variety of macro- and micro-level factors come to be played out within the school context. As educational researchers, the clearly laid plans of data collection are often unable to be carried out.
- The research subjects within the context of a rapidly changing society are also characterised by a kind of evolutionary (if not radical) transformation of their own personalities, ideologies and beliefs. The evolutionary status of such change entails that data collected from subjects about their beliefs, ideologies, attitudes, etc are potentially subject to a range of fluctuations. These fluctuations do not (as to be expected) progress in neat trajectories.
- Researching the subjective interpretations of research subjects may alter significantly in relation to time, place and context during the data collection process.
- The researcher is likely to find that research subjects often offer contradictory subjective interpretations about the same events. Research subjects may profess one set of claims on “Day One” and a completely different set of claims about the same issue a few days or weeks later.
- As a researcher one may also find wide gaps between what the research subjects say (for example, about their classroom practice) and what they actually do (in their classroom actions).

Also, in my initial plan I intended to select a school where all three policies, that is, WSE, DAS and SE were being implemented simultaneously. It then became apparent to me that both the schools in North West would not be implementing SE as they were secondary schools and SE targeted only primary schools at that stage, that is, Grade 3 learners. Although SE was not being implemented in the case study school, I did, however, elicit responses from the interviewees in order to gauge their understanding about the SE policy.

It turned out that the case study school was unaware that they were expected to nominate an evaluation co-ordinator who would serve as the link person between the school and the external evaluators. My original plan was to elect the evaluation co-ordinator to keep a diary of all events as they unfolded in the school. I therefore had to ask for additional nominations from the teaching staff for the purpose of keeping diaries. Furthermore, writing of diaries was not an exercise that most teachers were comfortable with. Writing of reflective diaries seemed to be within the cultural experience of only one of the three teachers selected, probably because she was a language teacher. Although the teachers were willing, two of them saw this activity as an alien one since one was a specialist in the technical field and the other in the sciences. This resulted in several hours of direct one-to-one consultation with those who had no experience in this mode of writing. I made regular telephonic contact with the teachers to establish progress and to offer guidance and support.

In the initial diary entries I found that the teachers were prone to producing data that they thought I would like to hear about. In my interactions with the teachers I found it essential to create the necessary kind of open critical discursive space within which they were able to freely produce comments (data) without fear of intimidation or repercussion. I did provoke the teachers into alternative ways of viewing or reviewing any event. This strategy was crucial to authentic data being collected. The teacher diaries, nevertheless, surprised and fascinated me.

The teachers even chose to ignore the guidelines that I had set with regard to the length of diary entries. The events they wrote about were detailed and insightful (in most cases). It was clear that they themselves soon saw the value of doing such an exercise.

My initial plan was to interview as many school governing body officials as possible. I realised that only the chairperson of the governing body was forthcoming but even after he realised that I was English speaking he was not really eager to participate even though I indicated that the interview would be in Afrikaans. My contact was thus limited to the school governing body chairperson only and my conversations were extremely brief, often unrelated to WSE.

My original plan did not indicate that I would interview the evaluation team as I believed at that stage that it would have been impossible to do so owing to many logistical difficulties.

However, my plan changed and I was able to interview all the evaluators as well as the monitor. Surprisingly, the entire team agreed, suggesting that WSE is a transparent process that we should all be able to learn from.

3.2.2 Instrumentation

Focussed group interviews with district officials proved difficult to conduct as there are few officials and it was difficult to arrange so that all could be present at the same time. I therefore resorted to only one focussed group interview with the district officials.

3.2.3 Research strategy

I conducted a pilot study on the implementation of WSE in one school where this policy had already been implemented. The pilot study served to identify the practitioners as well as provincial and district officials' policy implementation concerns, validated the research instruments to be used, and informed the overall research design strategy. A full-scale case study investigation was undertaken within a school where there was, *prima facie*, a readiness to receive and manage change. A single case study was selected because I wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of policy implementation.

Data was collected over a period of one year using a multi-method approach to data collection so as to overcome the limitations of case study research. Multiple methods of data collection included using in-depth, semi-structured *interviews* (both individual and focus group sessions) with stakeholders, identification of *critical incidents* in the policy implementation process, *observations* of key school meetings related to WSE, the analysis of WSE-related *documents* in the school environment, photographs, diaries, field notes, free writing schedules, questionnaires and observation schedules.

Although this is a highly qualitative case study there is also an element of quantitative research. The quantitative focus of the research manifested itself by the codification of teacher responses and the subsequent generation of frequency tables from the data in the questionnaire. The highly qualitative focus of the research was evident in the use of open-ended questions in parts of the questionnaire, the use of semi-structured interviews, diaries and free writing schedules. A more illustrated account of the features of this study will surface in the descriptions of the methodologies associated with each of the critical questions that I discuss later. Before describing the research strategies employed in relation

to each critical question, an overview of the research instruments is provided next followed by a discussion on the sample.

3.2.4 Instrumentation

The development of the instrumentation was a deeply iterative process. The supervisor inspired some questions in the instruments used. There were several versions of the instruments, which were reviewed jointly by the supervisor and my fellow doctoral students. The reviews ensured that the instruments were clearly focussed to collect only data that was necessary to answer the critical questions. All the instruments were piloted prior to use and responses were used to refine the instruments.

The instruments used for data collection are represented in Table 3.1.

	Type of instrument used
Visits to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview schedule for focussed group/individual interview with teacher/s • Semi-structured interview schedule for principal • Teacher diaries • Free writing schedule • Observation checklist • Questionnaire
Visit to provincial office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview schedule for provincial co-ordinator • Semi-structured interview schedule for evaluation team
Visit to national office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview schedule for national officials
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview schedule for policymaker
Visit to district office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview schedule for district officials • Free writing schedule

Table 3.1: Types of data collection instruments

Use of “empty table shells”

I also designed “empty table shells” to assist in the data collection activity. According to Yin (1994), these table shells forces one to identify exactly what data are being sought; it ensures that parallel information will be collected at different sites where a multiple-case design is being utilised and it aids in understanding what will be done with the data once they have been collected.

Although these “table shells” helped save time and energy there was at least one caution that I had to note. According to Miles and Huberman (1984b), entering the data to a set format as collected can get rapidly defeating and displays will probably have to be redone at least once. Thus, I generated some of the formats near the end of data collection when they could be more contextually and empirically grounded.

Use of a contact summary form

After every intensive field contact had been completed and field notes were written up in a systematic form, there was a need to reflect on what were the main themes, issues, problems and emerging questions during that contact. I therefore reviewed the written-up field notes and wrote up answers to each question briefly to develop an overall summary of the main points in the contact. For this purpose I made use of a contact summary sheet (i.e. a single sheet containing a series of focussing or summarising questions about a particular field contact).

Use of a document summary form

I also made use of a wide range of documents (e.g. evaluation reports, meeting agendas, newspaper articles, minutes of meetings etc) to supplement and corroborate the data from interviews. Some of these documents were lengthy and typically needed explaining or clarifying, as well as summarising. Therefore, in order for me to have a clear awareness of the document’s significance, it was imperative that I fill out a document summary form which I attached to the document it referred to. This form helped me to put the document in context, explained significance, and gave a brief content summary (Miles & Huberman 1984b).

I used several methods to develop a detailed profile of the case study school. Firstly, I made use of documentary evidence, which I gathered during school visits. The following variety of documents were collected for this purpose: memoranda, letters and other communiqués; administrative documents – organograms, proposals, business plans, budgets and other internal documents; agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings, written reports of events related to the WSE process; newspaper clippings, and school annual reports spanning over eight decades.

Secondly, I conducted direct observations of the “site” and an observation checklist (Appendix P) which focussed on issues such as the type of school building, the condition of the building and furniture, safety, access roads to the building etc, was completed. All these issues related to the indicators on functionality as noted in the WSE policy. To increase the reliability of observational evidence, a common procedure is to have more than a single observer making an observation – whether of the formal or casual variety (Yin 1994). Thus, one teacher was also asked to complete the observation checklist that was designed.

Thirdly, I also took photographs of the school and the various stakeholders, which helped to convey important case characteristics to outside observers (Dabbs 1982).

3.2.5 The sample

National Department

The following individuals from the National Department of Education were interviewed: two Directors, two Chief Education Specialists (CES) and one Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCES). The biographical details of these officials are provided in the table below:

Official	Area of expertise	Age	Gender	Years of experience in education
Director	WSE	49	Male	24
Director	Systemic evaluation	42	Male	15
CES	WSE	45	Male	17
CES	WSE	49	Male	23
DCES	WSE	49	Male	22

Table 3.2: Biographic data on National Department of Education officials

The policymaker/consultant

The policymaker who was interviewed is a United Kingdom based consultant who has over 20 years of experience in working on policy development and implementation in the area of school inspections, in both developing and developed country contexts. His experience includes being an inspector on Her Majesties Inspectorate (HMI) and developing the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) Framework for school inspections in England.

Provincial Department

The sample at the provincial level comprised of the provincial co-ordinator of WSE and the WSE external team. The co-ordinator in the North West province is a black male, with 25 years of experience in education. His diverse experiences as a teacher, principal, district manager and initiator for the establishment of the Quality Assurance Directorate in the province have put him in a favourable position to lead and manage the WSE unit. His undergraduate and post-graduate studies have been in the area of education – he is currently completing a doctoral degree.

In the table below I reflect the biographical details of the external evaluation team.

Member	1	2	3	4	5	6
Name of participant	Annamarie	Derrick	John	Lebo	Letupu	Mokgadi
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female
Age	53	38	38	40	43	45
Professional status	DCES	DCES	DCES	DCES	DCES	CES
Qualifications	Degree + diploma	Diploma + other	Degree + diploma	Degree + other	Degree + other	Degree + other
No. of years in education	30	15	10	12	14	16
No. of years in WSE	1	1	1	1	1	1
Area of expertise	Languages/ Arts & Culture	Technical subjects	Biology/ Agriculture	Maths/ Physical Science	Maths	Monitor

Table 3.3: A comparison of the general profile of the external evaluation team members

The data from the table reveals that the team is mainly male dominated, that is, four of the six members are male. Also, that experience of evaluators in the field of education varies from 10 years to an overwhelming 30 years. English is a second or third language in the case of all the evaluators.

Unions

A total of three union officials, that is, one from the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), one from the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and one from the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwyserunie (SAOU) were interviewed. I knew the NAPTOSA official and she pointed me to the two other officials, whom according to her, were the respective union representatives for the WSE policy formulation and implementation process. Biographical details of the union officials are provided in the table below:

Official	Gender	Age	Experience in education
NAPTOSA official	Female	51	28
SADTU official	Female	38	16
SAOU official	Male	39	16

Table 3.4: Biographical details on union officials

District

The district manager, deputy district manager and circuit manager were interviewed. In addition a total of four other district officials, that is, subject advisors and district support staff were also interviewed and were requested to complete the free writing schedules. Respondents at district level were chosen by two methods. First, I identified individuals occupying key positions, such as the District Manager of the Brits district. My reasoning here was that they would be able to furnish information from a management viewpoint. Second, I used a snowballing technique by which respondents were asked to identify others I should see and the sample was thus expanded. This sort of selection seemed more appropriate to my purposes than some statistical sampling procedure. Biographical details only of the three senior officials are provided in Table 3.5.

Official	Gender	Age	Experience in education
District manager	Male	54	30
Deputy district manager	Male	49	26
Circuit manager	Male	54	29

Table 3.5: Biographic details on district officials

At the case study school

The *interviews* targeted all the academic staff at the school. Staff was involved in individual and sometimes focussed group interviews. There were different waves of interviews with the staff. Hence in some cases individuals would have been interviewed at least on three different occasions. In some cases there may have been as many as five interviews per person, sometimes informally. In the case of informal interviews only handwritten notes were taken. In the main, I kept the interviews concentrated on the subjects of prominence. But I also encouraged respondents to discuss any general reflections they had on the WSE implementation process, and these reflections sometimes contributed to my thinking in interesting ways.

The *questionnaire* targeted the principal, management staff and teachers (academic personnel) at *Wagpos* High. The questionnaire was completed by twenty-seven respondents (of the total of thirty two) at the school (i.e. 87% response rate).

The biodata reveals that twenty (74%) were Level 1 teachers (ordinary classroom teachers) and the remaining seven (26%) comprised the school management team, that is, the principal, deputy principal and Heads of Department (HODs). The main teaching areas/subject areas for the respondents is as follows: eight (29,6%) teach Maths/Science; seven (25,9%) Technical Skills; eight (29,6%) Languages; one (3,7%) Humanities and three (11,1%) Agriculture.

In terms of gender of the respondents, 59,3 percent is male and 40,7 percent is female. A vast majority of the respondents (59,3%) are between 40-49 years of age. Only two (7,4%) of the respondents were between 25-29 years of age. The teaching experience of the respondents varied widely. A small percentage (11,1%) has between 6-10 years experience; 22,2 percent have between 11-15 years experience and 29, 6 percent have more than 20

years experience. An overwhelming majority (37%) of the individuals have 16-20 years teaching experience.

The qualifications of the respondents also varied, with only a small percentage holding a three-year diploma (3,7%). An equal percentage of the respondents are in possession of a degree and diploma (29,6%); more than one degree (29,6%) and a four-year diploma (29,6%). A small percentage (3,7%) holds a National Education Diploma and the remaining 3,7% of the respondents have other qualifications.

In deciding on the teachers for the keeping of *teacher diaries* I used the technique of “purposive sampling” which Cohen and Manion (1994:89) describe as follows:

In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgements of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs.

The teachers were selected based on three criteria: firstly, they were willing to keep a diary for the stipulated timeframe, secondly, they had adopted the WSE process and were enthusiastic about it and, thirdly, they had been actively involved in planning and preparation for the evaluation process.

One of the teachers selected is a male, 43 years old with 19 years of teaching experience, ten of these are at *Wagpos*. He is in possession of both a degree and diploma and has experience of teaching Grade 12 as well as of being an examiner at this level. He is an active union representative. The other teacher is female, 42 years of age, with only nine years of teaching experience. She is new to the *Wagpos* community and has only taught in the school on a full-time basis for the last three years.

3.2.6 Research strategy for critical question one

How do various stakeholders (education planners, union officials, teachers and principal) understand WSE policy in the school context?

In my attempt to answer critical question one, I conducted interviews with policymakers and implementers (the principal and teachers, union officials, provincial co-ordinator;

external evaluation team, national officials, the consultant and district officials) who were involved with the implementation of WSE policy in order to gauge their understanding of the policy.

Individual interviews were conducted with policymakers/implementers in order to establish the rationale of WSE policy, the explicit and implied goals of the policy, similarities and differences to other policies, and challenges facing implementation. Individuals who were interviewed included the United Kingdom based consultant who drew up the policy; the Director of SE, the Director of WSE, co-ordinators of WSE at the National Department of Education (i.e. Deputy Chief Education Specialists and Chief Education Specialists), the co-ordinator of WSE in the North West province, the external evaluation team members and individuals from three different unions (i.e. SADTU, NAPTOSA and SAOU).

Interviews were also conducted with the principal, teachers and district officials to gauge their understanding and their enactment of the WSE policy. Interviews with the principal were to provide insights into the school's preparation for the process, the external support received, training that he had received, challenges and successes experienced during the school self-evaluation process, the overall unfolding of the external evaluation and the post-evaluation process. Teacher interviews were conducted to provide rich insights into individual understandings of the WSE policy, their preparations for the process, views on the self-evaluation process conducted by the principal, challenges and successes as experienced by them during and after the evaluation.

The provincial co-ordinator provided details about the training received by the principal to conduct school self-evaluation when the school was informed about the evaluation, what documentation were provided, what support was to be provided by the district officials, what his role as provincial co-ordinator entailed, and finally what his understanding of the WSE process was. Interviews with evaluation team members provided information on their understanding of the policy, preparations they were engaged in for the evaluation, challenges and successes that they were facing during implementation, and their ideas on how the policy should be implemented. Interviews with the district officials provided information into their understanding of WSE, the type of support provided to the school and the challenges and successes experienced before, during and after the evaluation process.

The spread of officials interviewed served to reduce bias as well as allowed the different officials an opportunity of presenting their unique understandings and experiences with the WSE policy from their various portfolios. Each interviewee was faxed a copy of the questions to be asked so as to ensure a comfortable and transparent interview.

Individual interviews were conducted with the principal, provincial co-ordinator, district managers, some teachers, all the evaluation team members and the union officials. Focussed group interviews were conducted with teachers and district officials to establish their understanding and enactment of the WSE policy.

I used mainly semi-structured interviews since this format allowed me to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam 1988:74). However, in the case of some of the interviews, I combined all three types of interviewing so that some standardised information was obtained, some of the same open-ended questions were asked of all participants, and some time was spent in an unstructured mode so that fresh insights and new information could emerge (Merriam 1988:74).

The interviews (with policymakers and implementers) were tape-recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provided the database for analysis. Words or phrases or entire sentences were quoted exactly so as to provide the reader with the nuances of the interviewees. Handwritten notes were also taken as a contingency plan in the event of something going wrong with the tape recorder.

Free writing

Before commencing with focussed group interviews, I requested teachers and district officials to write down their responses to specific questions appearing on a free writing schedule (Appendix J and G). In this way each individual was afforded the opportunity to express his/her views which individuals sometimes find difficult to do in a focussed group interview especially if they did not agree with the views of the majority of the group. These schedules were used mainly for triangulation purposes.

Thirdly, I used *questionnaires* to elicit the principal's and teacher's views and understandings of WSE policy. The questionnaire has eight parts (i.e. part A to H) and each part has either open- or closed-ended questions. Part A related to biographical data of the respondent and the remaining seven parts, that is, Part B to H, was to capture the respondents' understanding of WSE policy.

I also sought answers to the following sub-question 1 (a): *What are the continuities as well as contradictions between WSE and related education policies of government, and how are these tensions reflected in stakeholder understandings of WSE?*

This question was answered by firstly conducting an in-depth policy *document analysis* (this included analysis of the responses/comments from the public when the WSE document was released; review of comments raised at the Minister's launch of the WSE policy and a review of three evaluation policies). Secondly, *interviews* were conducted with selected policymakers and implementers (principal and teachers, the consultant, national, provincial, district and union officials).

Document analysis

I first conducted an in-depth literal analysis of three key policy documents, that is, WSE, DAS and SE to establish what the continuities and contradictions between WSE policy and related government policies are. I generated a series of analytical questions (Annexure M), which were used to interrogate each of the policy documents with the goal of establishing the political and bureaucratic origins of each document; clarifying the explicit and implied policy goals articulated for evaluations in South African schools; noting the intended theory of action and the continuities and contradictions between the policies. Data were presented in a detailed narrative form for each policy analysed. The coherent and contradictory goals of all three policies were summarised.

According to Merriam (1988), documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. Analysis of this data source lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer.

Interviews and focused group interviews were held with teachers. They usually lasted roughly an hour, rarely under half an hour, sometimes up to two hours. These interviews I used the data extracted from document analysis as the basis for more in-depth questioning of policymakers and implementers through semi-structured interviews to elicit from them what they saw as the contradictions and continuities between WSE policy and the other related education policies of government. I also used the data gleaned from the document analysis together with data from interviews to highlight the differences in understanding of stakeholders as compared with the intentions of policy obtained from the literal analysis.

3.2.7 Research strategy for critical question two

How do schools implement WSE policy given the presence of other related evaluation policies in the school environment?

I gathered data on the implementation process in the school by making use of interviews, teacher diaries, observations, documents and photographs.

Interviews

I interviewed the principal, teachers, provincial and the district officials in order to elicit their roles in the implementation process within the school environment. I used carefully worded semi-structured interview schedules with the intention of permitting more latitude than in a structured interview. Interviews were recorded so as to provide a more accurate rendition of the interview. I also took notes by hand as a contingency plan in the event of something going wrong with the tape recording.

I allowed certain sections of the interview to be non-directed and this proved to be advantageous because the respondents revealed aspects about the WSE process, which was crucial for understanding the linkage between understandings and enactment of policy. The interviews proved to be extremely rich in perspectives on the processes I was studying, in information on the substantive policy implementation issues and in a blend of general reflections on understanding of policy.

Individual and focussed group interviews were held with teachers. They usually lasted nearly an hour, rarely under half an hour, sometimes up to two hours. These interviews remained open-ended and assumed a conversational manner, but a predetermined set of questions was followed. The focussed group interviews served two specific purposes, that is, to simply corroborate certain facts that the principal's interview had highlighted and secondly to allow the teachers to provide a fresh commentary about specific issues from their points of view.

Several informal discussions were held with teachers in the staffroom and on the sports field about how the implementation of policy was progressing. In these instances extensive field notes were taken.

Teacher diaries

Three teachers from the case study school were requested to keep diaries documenting the WSE process as it unfolded in their school context. Eventually only two of the three diaries were used because at the time of final submission of diaries one of the teachers became seriously ill and was unable to provide the completed document.

Observations

I played the role of observer in staff meetings, parent meetings and union meetings, which focussed on WSE, noting the critical incidents as they occurred. I also conducted classroom visits during which time I observed how the external evaluation process occurred. Throughout the implementation process I recorded notes about specific events, classroom behaviours and contents of bulletin boards. Notes were taken when staff members were speaking explicitly about WSE and its effect on either teaching or their personal lives. These notes were kept in a notebook and were used to provide quotes to illustrate points in the narrative that I constructed.

All the data collection methods mentioned above were used to find answers to four broad questions viz.;

(a) *What were the expectations of all those involved in the evaluation process?*

- Expectations of the principal and teachers about two weeks before the evaluation.
- Expectations of the principal and teachers a day before the evaluation.

(b) How well were they prepared for the process?

- What were the contacts between the external evaluation team and the school before, during and after the evaluation? (Study school correspondence; ask questions of principal and teachers).
- How training was done in preparation for the process (principal, teachers, evaluation co-ordinator).
- District support before the evaluation.

(c) What actually happened during the process? Conduct brief interviews with notes written during discussion.

- Report on the pre-evaluation visit.
- Description of the evaluation process in detail.
- Views of teachers and views of the principal.
- What events during the inspection week surfaced in staffroom discussions? (Observe and participate in conversations in staffroom before school, during breaks and lunch times, and after school-notes written as a four-day journal by the researcher.).
- Ask three key teachers in the school to keep a detailed journal.
- What was the principal's account of the evaluation day-by-day? (Record brief interviews around 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. each day.).

(d) What were the effects of what happened during the process?

- What was said at the oral report stage at the end of the week? (Record the principal's account in an interview.).
- What were the views of the principal and teachers during the week following the evaluation? (Conduct recorded interviews.).
- What issues are raised by the formal report? (Read the evaluation report.).

- What are the views of the principal and classroom teachers on the issues raised by the external evaluators? (Conduct brief recorded interviews.).
- What happens to the school development plan?
- What are the views of the district officials about the school development plan?

Data gathered through these four questions provided a broad overview of the implementation process and outcomes within the school environment.

3.2.9 Establishing validity

Instead of being preoccupied with the representativity of research (external validity), Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest the use of the construct “transferability”. The naturalist inquirer should be concerned with describing as “thickly” as possible the specificities of the research context under review.

I established credibility of the study by describing the setting (supplemented by photographs and data from the observation checklist), the participants and the themes of the study in rich detail so as to produce a feeling to readers that they have experienced or could experience the events being reported on. In the narrative I provided slices of interactions, experiences, actions (extracted from the teacher diaries and my observation notes), located people in specific situations, brought interactions alive between two or more people as well as provided a detailed rendering of how people felt (extracted from interview transcripts and teacher diaries). By providing vivid detail the readers are helped to understand that the account is credible. This also enables any reader of the research report to choose the degree of distance between the context being described and his/her own context. The choice is left up to the reader to decide whether to transfer ideas, insights or interpretations across into their own contexts.

I employed several other strategies to enhance the validity of my case study. Firstly, I conducted a pilot study on the implementation of WSE in one school where this policy has already been implemented. The pilot study identified the practitioners as well as the provincial and district officials’ policy implementation concerns, validated the research instruments to be used, and informed the overall research design strategy.

Secondly, I made use of multiple sources of evidence, which allowed me to address a broader range of attitudinal and behavioural issues. However, the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence was the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation. According to Cohen and Manion (1994) triangulation techniques in the social sciences attempt to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality she is investigating. Furthermore, the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each while overcoming their unique deficiencies (Denzin cited in Merriam 1988:69). Thus by using this particular research design the findings or conclusions are likely to be more convincing and accurate since it was based on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode.

Thirdly, I took the data and interpretations back to the participants so that they could confirm the credibility of the information and the narrative account that I presented. With the lens focused on the participants, I systematically checked the data and the narrative account. This was done by requesting the participants to view the raw data (i.e. transcriptions and observational field notes) and to comment on the accuracy. Participants were asked to comment on firstly, whether the themes were applicable, secondly, whether they were developed with sufficient evidence and, thirdly, whether the overall account was realistic and accurate. I then incorporated these comments into the final narrative. Hence the credibility of the overall study was enhanced by welcoming participants' reactions to both the data and final narrative.

Fourthly, I requested a colleague who was involved with WSE and who was familiar with the research to serve as a sounding board for ideas as well as to provide written feedback after reviewing the data and research process. The main functions of the peer reviewer was to provide support, challenge my assumptions and ask hard questions about the methods and interpretations I used during the entire duration of the study.

Fifthly, I provided clear documentation on all research decisions and activities undertaken during the course of the dissertation in line with the notion of the *audit trail* suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984b). I kept a record of the procedures used for sampling,

development of instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. I also requested a colleague to conduct periodic external audits of the documentation. This auditing model was useful in that my *modus operandi* was made more explicit but did, however, prove to be a time-intensive exercise.

Section Three: Data processing, analysis and re-presentation

Approaching the data analysis from an interpretive perspective, I offer some insight into how I had conducted both surface-level and deep-structure analysis.

The propositions (see section on conceptual framework in Chapter Two) assisted me with both data collection and data analysis. The propositions were used to direct my attention to what should be focussed on, that is, look for relevant evidence and stay within feasible limits.

I transcribed all interviews. Responses to particular questions were transcribed in brief narrative form. Responses from various interviews were also compared and categorised as well as patterns and trends were identified, divergent responses and possible explanations recorded. This information was cross-checked with data generated through the analysis of documents, observation notes, free writing schedules and diaries. The qualitative data was analysed manually.

I also made use of computer-based analysis for the principal and teacher questionnaires. Prior to data reduction, that is, coding data in preparation for analysis, the questionnaires were edited. Three tasks central to editing, which Moser and Kalton (1977) refer to, were carried out: firstly, completeness (a check to make sure that there is an answer to every question); secondly, accuracy (as far as possible, a check to ensure that all questions have been answered accurately); and thirdly, uniformity (a check to ensure that all respondents interpreted the questions uniformly).

Next, all the data from the questions in the questionnaire were coded. The answers in the questionnaires are referred to as post-coded answers since the coding was developed after the questionnaires had been administered and answered by the respondents. A coding frame was also devised to accommodate the responses to open-ended questions. This was done by

selecting 10 percent of the questionnaires randomly and generating a frequency tally of the range of responses as a preliminary to coding classification. Having devised the coding frame, I made a further check on its validity by using it to code up a further sample of the questionnaires. All the coding frames covering information to be abstracted from the questionnaires are contained in a code list.

Thereafter, the data from the questionnaires were captured onto SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Bent & Hull 1970). This package allowed me to conduct routine frequency counts, cross-tabulations and to present the data in the form of tables and charts.

The *data displays* included many types of graphs, tables, figures and charts. All these were designed to assemble organised information in an immediately accessible, compact form, so that the reader will be able to see what was happening in order to draw justified conclusions.

I have provided what I have called a *progress gradient for WSE policy implementation* (reflecting time on the y-axis in months; phases of WSE on the x-axis). This provides the reader with a graphical representation of how the implementation of the WSE policy progressed (see Chapter Six).

In this study, one of the issues that I looked closely at was to establish what the various sources of assistance are to the principal and teachers at the school in implementing the WSE policy. Since assistance occurs in an organisational context, this is represented on what I have called a *context chart with assistance flows*, with arrows showing where assistance comes from and who receives it (Miles & Huberman 1984b:88). Such a chart shows the organisational position of givers and receivers of help (see Chapter Six).

3.4 Chapter summary

This inquiry is designed to explore the understandings and enactment of WSE policy of various stakeholders in the school environment. I have worked from a constructivist/interpretative perspective aspiring towards grasping and interpreting stakeholder understandings and enactment of WSE policy, assuming multiple realities. I do

not assume from my perceptions that there is a single reality. On the contrary, I believe that each stakeholder experiences and understands education policy from his/her own point of view, and so encounters and conceives a different reality.

The Inquiry Context

This chapter opened the window into the research practices I engaged in during the course of my study. The reasons for my choice of sample were presented, together with demographic data pertaining to the sample. The data collection instruments and procedures for data collection were described in detail followed by an in-depth presentation of data processing, analysis procedures and data display.

Chapter Four will begin by identifying the social and historical research context. A brief overview of the state of education in the North West province followed by details about education in the Brits district, that is, the district in which the case study school is located, is presented. The focus of attention will then shift to the development of a historical portrait of the school. In this section I provide snapshots of critical incidents in the life of the school. This chapter is loaded with highly visual material (photographs) with the sole purpose of providing the reader with as clear a picture of the inquiry context as possible.

education provision for learners and the capacity for educational change (Pinar, 2002). There are also various expectations of provincial officials and district officials in implementing W&E policy at the school therefore it is important to explore the contexts in which officials operate, noting both factors that facilitate and hinder their daily activities.

This chapter, which focuses on the inquiry context, comprises of two sections. In the *First Section* I provide a detailed background to the social context, that is, the province and the district in which the case study school is located. In *Section Two* I trace the historical development of the case study school providing snapshots of critical incidents in the life of the school. This discussion culminates in a detailed description of the current culture and organization of the school – culture and organization of the school will also influence implementation of policy.

Chapter Four

The Inquiry Context

By showing institutions in the process of transformation, history alone makes it possible to abstract the structure which underlies the many manifestations and remains permanent throughout a succession of events.

Claude Levi-Strauss (quoted in Lortie 1975:1).

4.1 Introduction

In this research study I explore stakeholder understandings and implementation of the WSE policy in a school context where there is a readiness to receive and manage change. It is necessary therefore to understand not only the school context but also the broader context in which the school is located, that is, the Brits district and the North West provincial education department – as these contexts will undoubtedly influence policy implementation in the school context. The various provinces in the country vary vastly with regard to education provision for learners and the capacity for educational change (Fleisch 2002). There are also various expectations of provincial officials and district officials in implementing WSE policy at the school therefore it is important to capture the contexts in which officials operate, noting both factors that facilitate and hinder their daily activities.

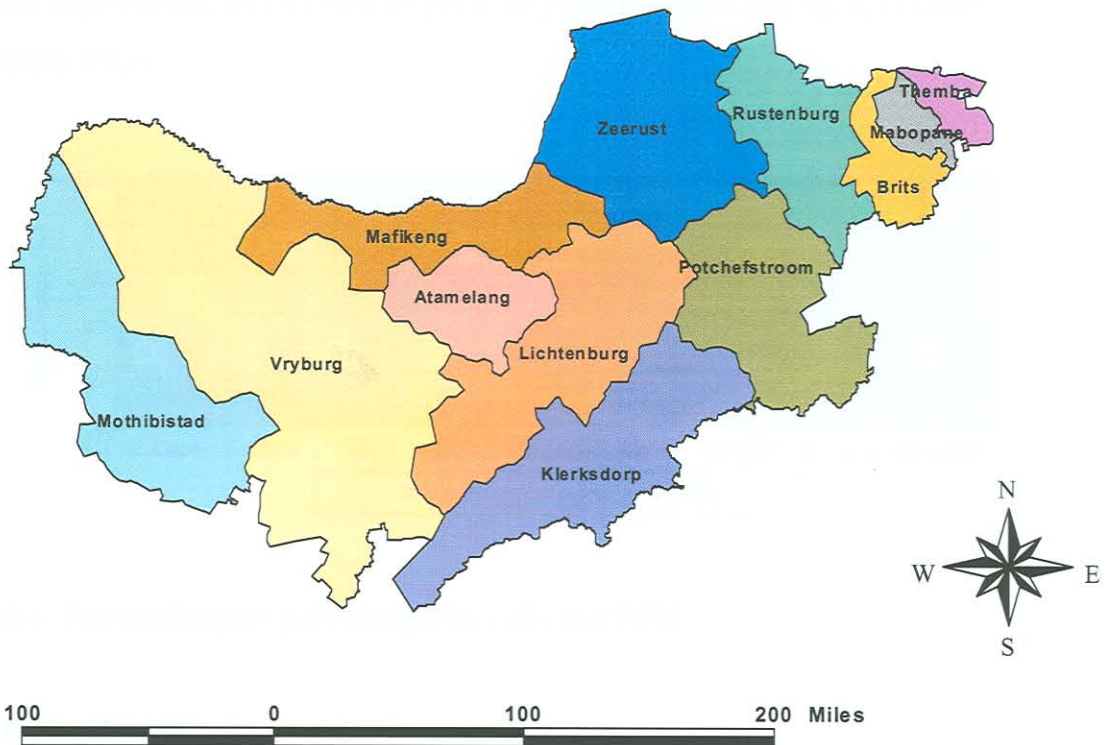
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Section One

4.1.1 The social context of *Wagpos High*

The case study school is located within the North West province, one of nine provinces in South Africa. The North West province is divided into 12 education districts¹⁸ with Brits being the one in which the case study school is located (see map 4.1. below). An education district (synonymous with district office) in the South African context is described as an administrative and support unit which is hierarchically closest to schools (DoE 2001a).

Education Districts in North West Province

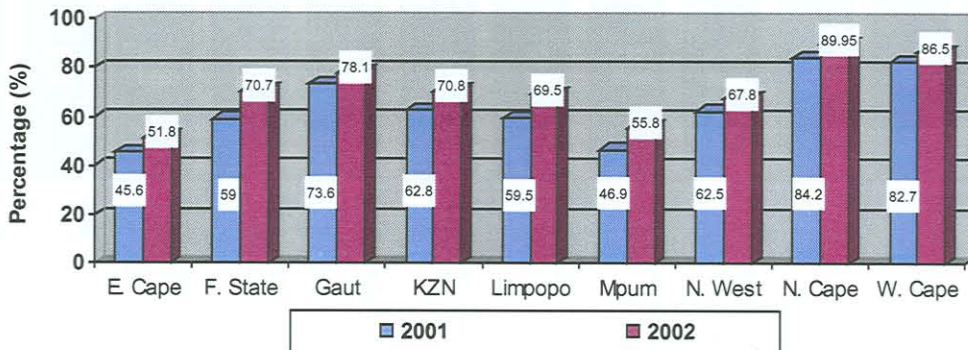


Map 4.1: North West province showing the education districts

¹⁸ The other 11 districts are: Atamelang; Klerksdorp; Lichtenburg; Mabopane; Mafikeng; Mothibstad; Potchefstroom; Rustenburg; Temba; Vryburg and Zeerust.

The province has a total of 946 160 learners¹⁹, 31 376 educators and a total of 2 325 schools²⁰ (DoE 1999). The learner-to-educator ratio is 30.2 whilst the gross enrolment ratio (GER expressed as a percentage) defined as the number of learners enrolled in primary and secondary grades regardless of age, as a proportion of the appropriate age group in the population (7-year-olds to 18-year-olds) is 95 percent. The gender parity index (GPI)²¹ is 1.01, which indicates that the females have a more or less similar level of access to education in the province.

The North West provincial pass percentage for Grade 12 examinations²² over 2001 and 2002 is ranked fifth and seventh highest respectively when compared to other provinces. There has also been a slight improvement in 2002 as compared to the year 2001. The statistics for 2002 were 67,8 percent and 62,5 percent in 2001, showing an increase of 5,3 percent. The statistics for years 2001 and 2002 reflect that Northern Cape had the highest pass percentage (84,2% and 89,95% respectively) and Eastern Cape the lowest (45,6% and 51,8% respectively).



Graph 4.1: Provincial pass percentages in 2001 and 2002

Profile of the Brits district

The Brits district consists of six circuits, namely; Letlhebele, Brits, Bakwena Bapo, Mothotlung, Hebron and Garunkuwa. The boundary of the Brits district stretches to

¹⁹ This includes learners in pre-primary, Grade R/O and ELSEN at ordinary public and independent schools.

²⁰ Public and independent schools only.

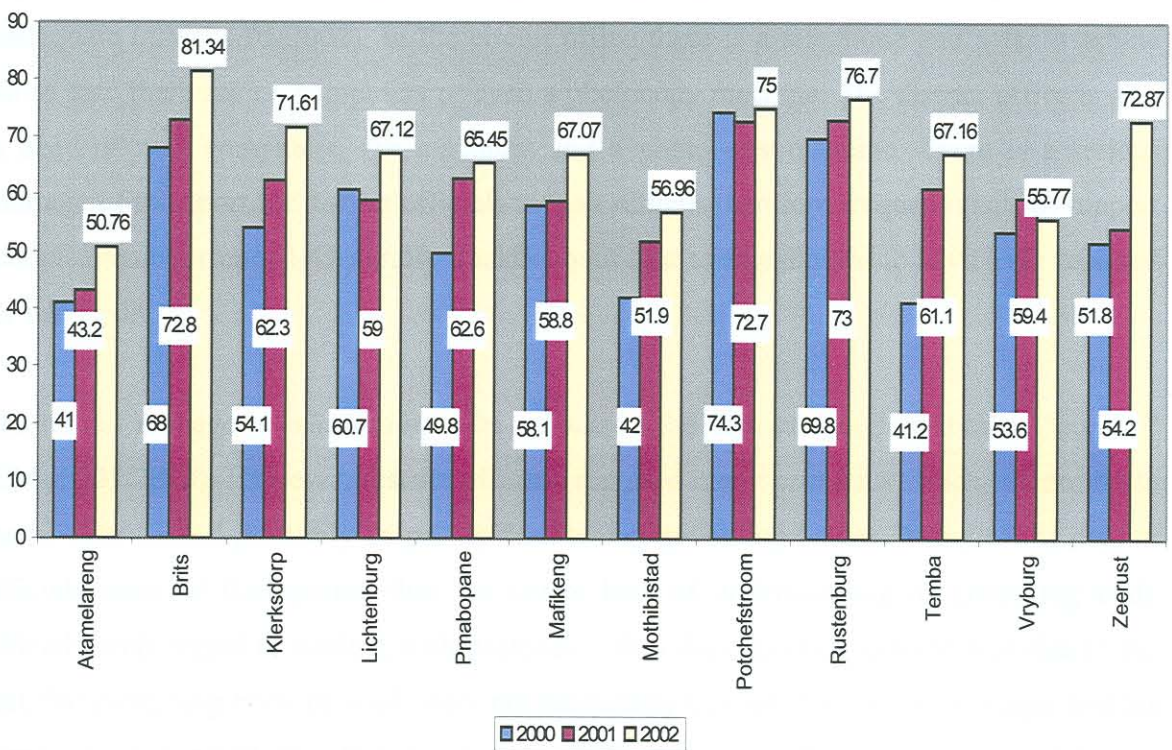
²¹ GPI is defined as GER for females divided by GER for males. This indicator is used to indicate the level of access of females to education.

²² Statistics from Department of Education Report on Senior Certificate Examination, 27 December 2002.

Mooiνοoi in the south west, Marikana Road along the north west border, Asem in the north, Garankuwa in the east, Klipgat in the north east and in the south it covers the area up to the border with Gauteng towards Krugersdorp.

Student outputs

The graph below reflects a performance comparison²³ of the 12 districts in the North West province for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002.



Graph 4.2: District performance over three years

The pass percentage in Brits improved significantly from 68 percent in 2000 to 72,8 percent in 2001 and to 81,34 percent in 2002. This places Brits as the top performing district in the province for 2002. The other two top performing districts are Potchefstroom (74.3% in 2000, 72.7% in 2001 and 75% in 2002) and Rustenburg (69.8% in 2000, 73% in 2001 and

²³ Performance is reflected in percentages (%). Also note that the x-axis shows the 12 districts in North West province and the y-axis shows performance in percentage.

76,7% in 2002). The Brits circuit has been registered as the best performing circuit for the past two years.

Education circuit and district office of Brits

The Brits *circuit office* is located in Mclean Street, on the first floor of the Sieling Centre, whilst the *district office* is located in Van Velden Street, on the fourth floor of the City Council of Madibeng Building.

Physical resources in both the circuit and the district office have been reported to be inadequate (CM 24/05/2002). In the circuit office there is a telephone and a fax machine but to date there are no computers or even a photocopy machine. The district office is also in need of new computers, fax machines and a photocopy machine. There is a serious shortage of transport for district officials to visit schools therefore frequent visits to support schools are not arranged. Generally it takes about four to five months to have a car repaired for use again.

The circuit manager's *relationship with schools* in the district was described as "cordial" (CM 24/05/2002). However, district officials reported many problems which, according to them, were caused primarily by poorly functioning governing bodies. Many of the district officials were of the opinion that the severe lack of understanding of governing body officials with regard to dealing with protocol within the education context was due to the fact that governing body officials were not adequately trained. The district manager and his deputy were involved on a daily basis with negotiation and conflict management of diverse interests rather than being involved in playing an instructional or goal-setting role. District officials claimed that the greatest problem faced by the district was not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation, overload and incoherence resulting from the uncritical and uncoordinated acceptance of too many initiatives.

Facilities in the district are limited. The district library is located in central Brits. There are no teacher resource centres in the district – the nearest is in Pretoria. The district has also not been targeted for any national *projects* such as the District Development Project (DDP) or the Quality Learning Project (QLP) – which have been instituted mainly for uplifting education in districts.

Schools in the Brits district

The Brits district has 165 schools and a total learner enrolment of 81 155, that is, 51 312 learners are at primary schools and the remaining 29 361 learners are at secondary schools. The total number of educators in the Brits district is 2 728 (DoE 1999).

The *conditions at schools* were described as varying, that is, from being very good to very poor (CM 24/05/2002). Statistics obtained from the EMIS Database²⁴ at the National Ministry indicates that 63,03 percent of the schools have telephones, 19,39 percent have cell phones, 15,75 percent have fax machines and only 4,24 percent have internet facilities. Some schools were well resourced with textbooks and learner support materials whilst others did not receive any for the 2002 year from the department. Delays with regard to delivery of textbooks and learner support materials have been experienced in the province mainly because of logistical problems with the recruitment of contractors.

The EMIS statistics also reflect that the *physical infrastructure* of schools in the district also varied widely with only 75,15 percent of the schools being electrified, 2,42 percent wired but not supplied with power and the remaining utilising alternative sources of power. A total of 96,36 percent of the schools had toilet facilities but the kinds of facilities varied, that is, chemical toilets (1,25%), flush to septic tank (18,9%), flush to sewer (44%) and pit latrines (35,2%). Buildings are in a state of serious disrepair and neglect whilst in the more affluent areas the buildings are well maintained probably because of the higher school fees paid by learners attending these schools. District and circuit officials claimed that not much could be done about the infrastructure because amenities and physical facilities are not handled by the DoE but rather by the Department of Public Works on behalf of the DoE.

Section Two

4.2.1 The historical context of *Wagpos High* (1928-2003)

In this section I provide a description of the case study school, *Wagpos High*. This detailed portrait of the school is presented for three reasons. Firstly, since this is a single case study the burden is placed on the researcher to contextualise in rich detail the school environment

²⁴ Statistics were gathered on the 25/04/2000.

in which the teachers, students, governing body officials, provincial and district officials of my study were immersed. Secondly, since the research is about WSE it is necessary that a vivid picture of the school is presented so that the reader is able to identify with the results of the evaluation. Thirdly, noting the cultural and organisational setting will provide the reader with insight into why the policy is implemented in the way that it eventually unfolds at the school.

I have traced the historical development of the school over its 75-year lifespan, noting critical events that have taken place during the different decades in the life of the school culminating in an account of the school in its present-day form. Data was collected mainly through interviews, documents such as school annual reports spanning eight decades, photographs, and a structured school observation questionnaire completed by one teacher as well as the researcher.

The resulting profile tells a story of the school. Everyone that appears in the photographs is one of the characters in the story of the life of this school. Some have been main characters in the story and have appeared in many photographs, others are in the background and many do not appear in the photographs at all.

Wagpos High is nestled comfortably in a valley at the foot of the Langeberg Mountains in the heart of rural Afrikanerdom in the North West province. The school is situated on a farm about 7km out of Brits town. The summers in the school area are extremely hot and dry whilst the cold winds during the winters often make the school grounds uninviting to be in. The school was first opened in 1928 at about the same time that the Hartebeespoort Dam and its system of canals were completed. The school was founded at Krokodilpoort – this was at the point of the eastern canal camp headquarters. Initially the dispersed smallish buildings of the canal camp were used and the bush-infested land around this area was cleaned by Mr Dirk Mostert, members of the first staff and a few boys, for the establishment of fields for cultivation and to lay the foundation for the Brits Agricultural Vocational school (Yearbook 1953). The school was originally founded by Union Education²⁵ to cater for “white people” in the area of agricultural training. In the apartheid era white farmers were highly subsidised and farming was considered to be a lucrative

²⁵ South Africa was a union at this time and education was underpinned by racial differentiation. This period preceded South Africa becoming a republic.

career. Students attending such schools were also generously subsidised by the apartheid government.

Although the facility was originally mainly intended for the practical training of future farmers on the settlement, it also drew pupils from other parts of the Transvaal. At first the interest and enrolment was promising but with time it decreased and this could be ascribed mainly to the following factors: firstly, the course that started after Standard 6 was mainly practical and led, after two-and-a-half years to a diploma that was not readily recognised in public life; and secondly, the school received boys of needy parents and farming conditions were proving to be more difficult and unattractive (Yearbook 1953). The enrolment at agricultural vocational schools continuously decreased – also at Brits – until it was decided to hand these schools back to the provinces on 1 April 1938.

The Transvaal Education Department soon realised that the courses (subjects) at this school had to be improved to be at the same level as courses at similar schools in the province. Firstly, the two-year course was improved to lead to the Transvaal Junior Certificate but enrolment continued to be disappointing. Finally, in 1941, it became a four-year course that led to the Transvaal “Final” certificate as at other secondary schools (Yearbook 1953). Immediately there was renewed interest and increased enrolment as this was the only school of its kind in the province – now an agricultural high school. In the meantime the farming activities of the institution had to depend on itself for economic justification and development, a step in the right direction because from here onwards the farming division developed successfully.

It was soon apparent that the hostel and school could not satisfy the “new” need and further extensions were contemplated. The course offered at the school was further improved to satisfy the requirements of matriculation exemption for access to university. From 1 January 1949 the school became officially known as the Brits Agricultural High School.



#1 Photograph: (1950) “Aerial view of the school”.

The 1950s may be regarded as the era in which significant changes to the infrastructure of the school were accomplished. Extensions to the existing hostel were completed in the middle of 1949, and a new hostel to accommodate 60 boys was completed in 1957 (Yearbook 1957). In the same year a new classroom, modern library, the school hall and extensions to the dining hall were completed (Yearbook 1957). These expansions in infrastructure were accompanied by an increase in student intake and an increase in staff. In 1950 the student intake was 130 and staff was 11 (all male) but by the end of the 1950s student numbers had increased to 157 and staff numbers had swelled to 13 (academic staff remained an all-male team) (Yearbook 1951, 1961). Only the secretary and administrative support at the school were female; however, the hostels were administered largely by a female-dominated staff. Throughout this decade the school had to refuse admission to applicants owing to the fact that there was insufficient space in the hostels to accommodate all applicants. There were five other agricultural schools in the Transvaal that were not anywhere near full capacity, yet Hoerskool Brits Landbou continued to be inundated with applications for admission as it had a reputation for being an excellent school not only for academic results but also for instilling in the learners the “right” morals and values.

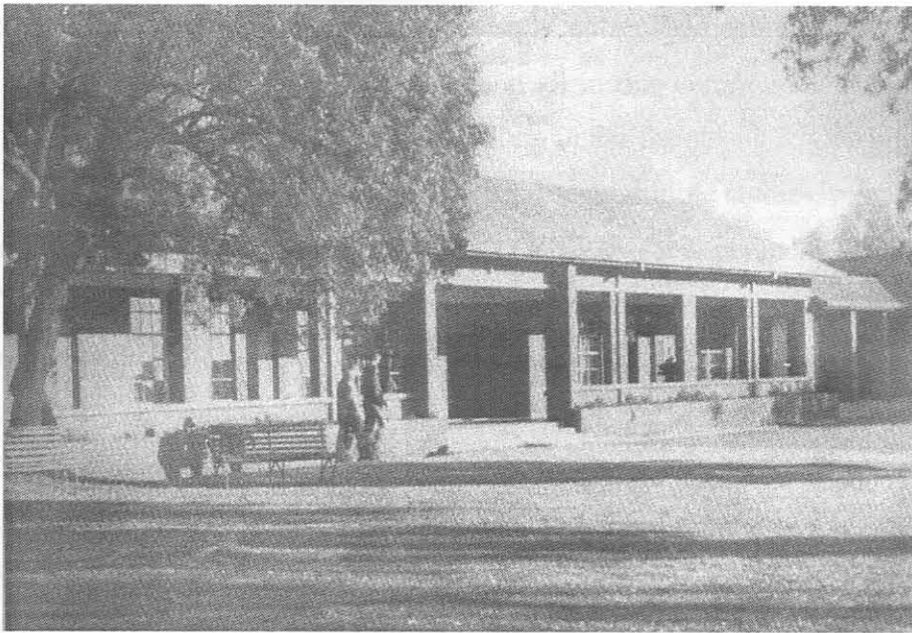


#2 Photograph: (1950) “Official opening of the hostel. Hostel rooms in the background”.

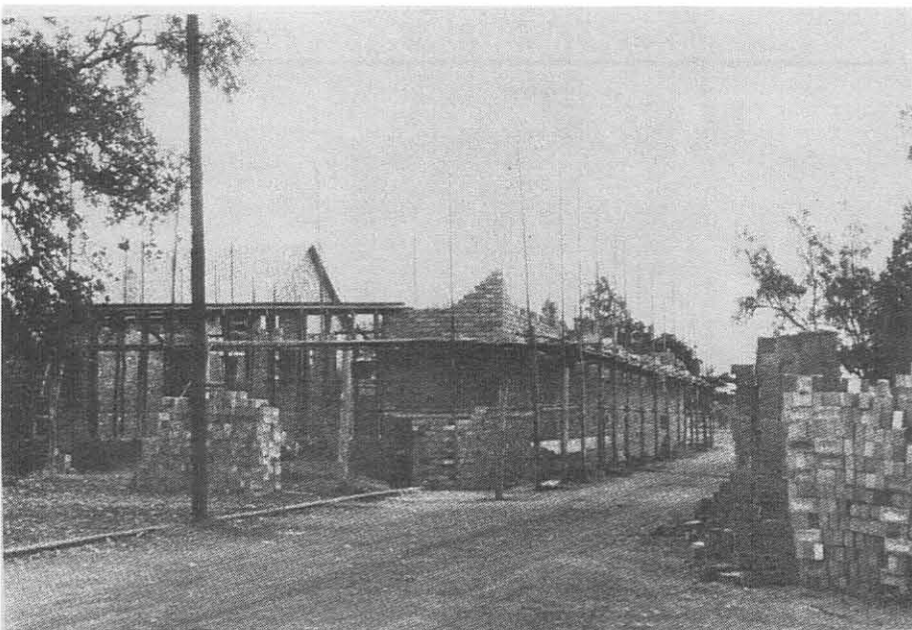
#4 Photograph: (1953) “New hostel with modern facilities for staff and students”.



#3 Photograph: (1950) “Guests on the field at the official opening of the hostel. Standing on the far right is Mr du Preez, the principal”.



#4 Photograph: (1953) “New hostel with modern facilities for staff and students”.



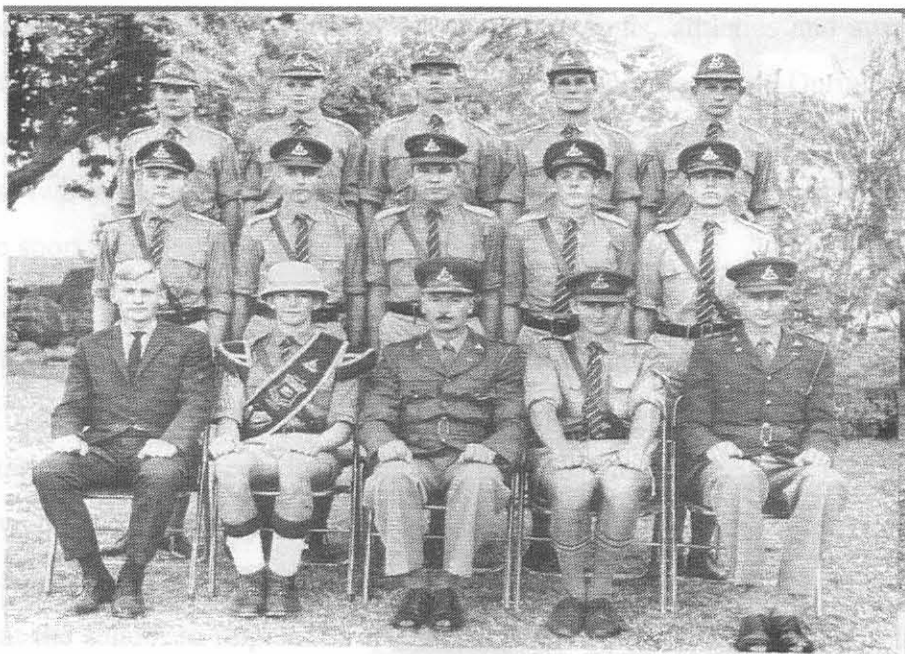
#5 Photograph: (1957) “School hall being built”.

#6 Photograph: (1957) “Cadet officers”.

²⁸ Christian National Education continued in South Africa up until 1994 when the African National Congress took over power in South Africa. Christian National Education is based on the reports of C. F. van der Merwe (1987).

The powerful Christian National Education²⁶ philosophy was practiced religiously within the confines of the school community. The deeply entrenched morals and values of the Afrikaner nation were inculcated among one and all in this community. During this time the Christian Student Movement gained momentum under the strong leadership of Mr JHL Scheepers who encouraged the young men to attend regular bible studies, practice a healthy God-loving approach to life and to embrace “God” as their personal “*sagligmaker en verlosser*”. Contact with other Christian Student Movements was encouraged and followers engaged in regular collaborative programmes and activities.

The 1950s also ushered in the introduction of cadet training at white schools. The Hoerskool Landbou Brits was no exception. The youth were trained in advance on how to conduct themselves in true military style in preparation for compulsory military training that each and every white male had to undergo on completion of school. Cadet training was a means of preparing the youth both mentally and physically for what was to be expected when they eventually got to the army training camps. It was also a means of ensuring that there would always be a constant supply of trained individuals to continue feeding the ideology of apartheid and to ensure that there would not be any reason to jeopardise the balance of power in the country.



#6 Photograph: (1957) “Cadet officers”.

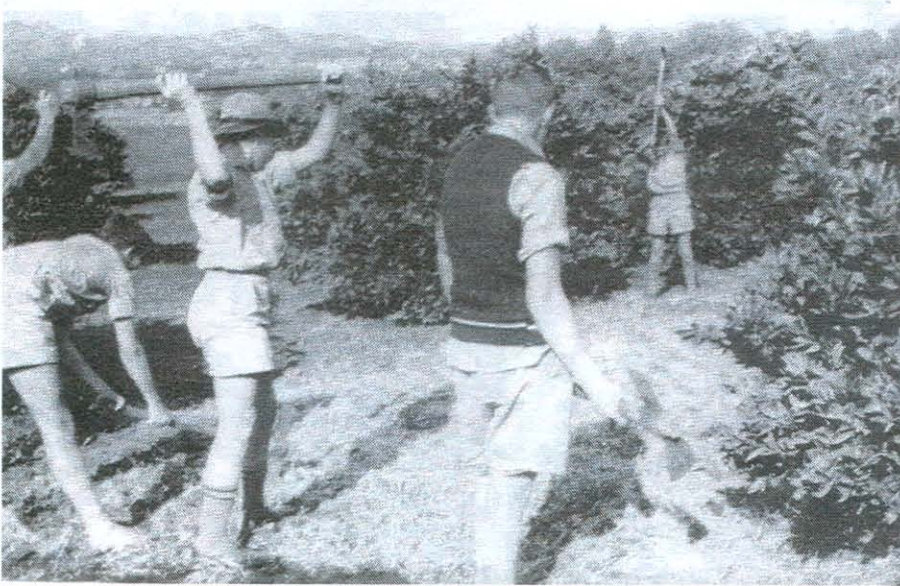
²⁶ Christian National Education continued in South Africa up until 1994 when the African National Congress took over power in South Africa. Christian National Education is based on the tenets of Christian philosophy.



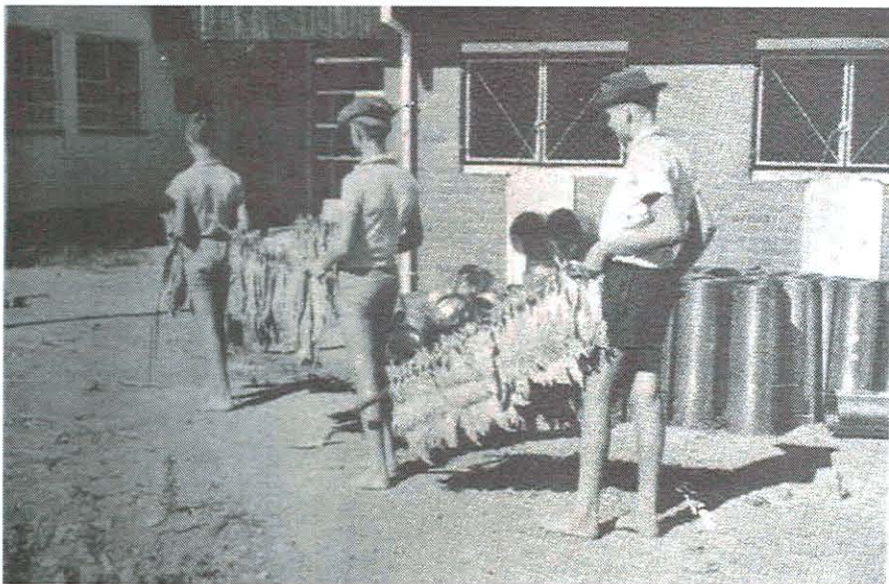
#7 Photograph: (1951) “The cadet orchestra”.

Despite the small numbers of learners, the school continued to be recognised by parents and the education department as an outstanding school both on the sportsfield and academically (Yearbook 1951). The school participated in rugby, tennis, athletics and swimming, and also boasted a successful debating team, choir and shooting team. During 1951 a new school stadium was constructed and the new rugby field was laid with grass (Yearbook 1951). Just two years later, a second rugby field was laid out. This in itself reflected the love of the sport by all at the school.

Throughout this decade the farms performed well even though there were times when they were poorly capacitated (Yearbook 1953). Tobacco planting was practiced on the farms – a practice started by the pioneers in the country in 1850. Magaliesberg tobacco soon became well known in the country because of its unique ability to burn, its strong aroma and addictive taste. Over the years improved cultivation and harvesting techniques were practiced at the school to improve crop yield. The school sold the tobacco in leaf form to the producers in the area. Tobacco remained the main income generator in the school (Yearbook 1968).



#8 Photograph: (1961) “Students working on the orange farms”.



#9 Photograph: (1968) “Tobacco leaves being carefully carried by learners”.

The year 1953 marked the 25th anniversary of the school, which was commemorated in true Afrikaner style by a number of programmes and activities. A special edition of the regular yearbook was launched, which apart from providing news on the happenings of that year, provided a window into the life of the school over its 25 years of existence. This decade drew to a close with the school receiving honours in the inter-school athletics meeting and the Afrikaans Language Festival of 1959.



#10 Photograph: (1953) “Cover of special edition of the school yearbook – 25th anniversary of the school”.

The 1960s were also seen as a decade, which was marked by many memorable events both in the life of the school and that of the country. The year of 1961 will be remembered as the year in which South Africa became a republic. This year was also an exceptional year for the school, whose learners, fondly known as the “Lanties”, made their mark by winning the floating trophy in the schools choir competition. Apart from this, this decade will be remembered for the severe droughts that were experienced in the province. These droughts seriously affected the crops on the school farms and the balance sheets reflected an all-time low in the income from the fields. The then principal, Mr du Preez, wrote in the 1964 school yearbook:

Laat ons maar net elke dag ons plig getrou doen. Hy sal verder vir ons sorg. (du Preez, 1964 Yearbook).

Let us just do our duty diligently each day. He (God) will provide for our future/or for the rest. (English translation).

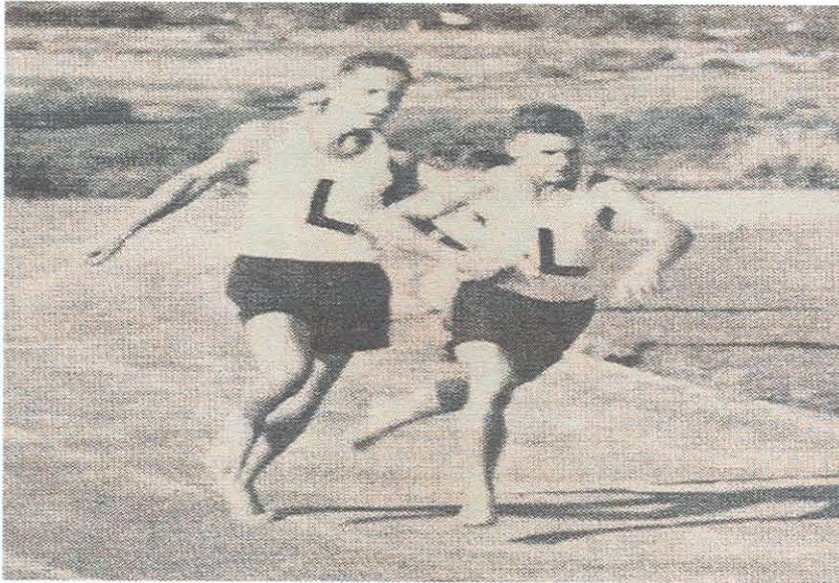
When the rains finally arrived the Hartebeespoort Dam could not contain the raging waters resulting in the dam bursting its banks.



#11 Photograph: (1967) “Hartebeespoort Dam floods”.

The year 1966 was marked by the schools’ participation in the country’s celebrations of five years of being a Republic. This was also the year in which Mr du Preez, the principal for 23 years, bade farewell to the school. In the following year Mr P Bredenkamp took over the reins to steer the school.

The school, under the new leadership of Mr Bredenkamp, continued to strengthen its interaction with neighbouring schools, especially with the Hoerskool Huishoudskool in terms of establishing a co-educational school choir group. As yet another decade in the life of the school drew to a close – the changes, some evident and others more subtle, could be seen. By this time there had been a meteoric rise in the learner population to 230 accompanied by an increase in the staff compliment which was up to 15 full-time teachers and one part-time music teacher. The school also enjoyed resounding success on the academic front by securing a 100 percent matriculation pass rate for four years in succession during this decade.



#12 Photograph: (1957) “Lanties on the sportsfield”.

After several years of existing as an agricultural school, technical subjects were then introduced into the school in 1973. This introduction signalled that there was a need for the name of the school to be changed. The then principal forwarded two names for consideration, that is, *Wagpos* and Transmagalies. *Wagpos* gained greater support among the staff and community and so the school became known as such. The name has strong significance in that a “wagpos” when translated loosely into English means a guard post – usually constructed as a high pillar with a room on top which is occupied by a guard at all times. This was used in the old days of war and is still a common feature at prisons and high security areas.



#13 Photograph: (2002) “Entrance to *Wagpos* High”.



#14 Photograph: (2002) “*Wagpos* emblem”.

Over the years the school continued to churn out students who mostly continued with a technical or agricultural career. The culture of the institution was widely recognised as being dominated by “Afrikaner philosophies”. In keeping with these philosophies students generally did not display any overt defiance and resistance throughout the era when other schools were engaged in the “march to freedom”. During this era the apartheid government relinquished its tight control on the right of individuals to disagree with its agenda: the toy-toying down streets seemed to attract more diverse representatives than just the African township youth who immortalised themselves by laying down their lives for the cause of their education in Soweto in 1976. Academics and lay people, religious leaders of different faiths and racial groups; students and teachers; newly released activists and ardent community voices were attempting to forge synergy with the various forces of resistance to apartheid (Samuel 1998).

Unsurprisingly, throughout this time of turbulence in the country, activities at *Wagpos* continued with no disruptions. It was “business as usual” at *Wagpos*. Debates and discussions over the turmoil in the education system continued in the *Wagpos* staff room but rarely left these boundaries to make way to the classrooms. *Wagpos* and many others alike were a symbol to many of the separatist ideologies of their contribution to the advancement of their island community.

The early 1980s signalled the imminent release of political prisoners and the possibility of dismantling of the apartheid government. Waves of panic swept through the country and the *Wagpos* community also sent out “silent” signals – as reflected by this article which appeared in the 1987 school yearbook.

*Jong is ek
maar sterk in my geloof
dat die rooi bloed
van die boerseun
die vlam van vryheid en reg
onuitblusbaar sal laat brand
in hierdie groot en wye land.*

Mara du Plessis



#15 Photograph: (1987) “Picture and caption that appeared in the yearbook”.

During this time many right-wing extremists took their children out of *Wagpos* and kept them on their farms in anticipation of political unrest. As soon as the hype and tension was over these learners returned to school. This period was described by teachers as a “quiet waiting period” and since nothing drastic happened life at *Wagpos* returned to “normal”.

In 1993 the school became co-educational with the entry of the first group of girls. As part of the movement towards reconciliation politics in the reconstitution era after the democratic elections in 1994, the restrictions on admissions of students of other race groups were relaxed in all schools. The majority of the schools engaged in serious transformation campaigns to attract the “cream of the crop” from the black populations. This included the drive to have students bussed in to the former model C schools from neighbouring township schools. Amidst this fervour to transform schools it was surprising that the student population at *Wagpos* remained completely white. Such was the situation until 1998 when the first black student was enrolled into the school. To date not a single student of colour has matriculated at this school and statistics reflect that presently there are only three black students on the admissions register of the school. Transformation at the school has not only been extremely slow with the learner population but to date remains non-existent for the teaching staff, all of whom are white.

The principal and staff are adamant that there have been several campaigns to recruit students of colour but this has proved to be unsuccessful especially when students are informed at the orientation event that they would be expected to work on the farms. According to most teachers there is a perception among black families that this kind of education will keep black students in poverty as this kind of education is likened strongly to the “Bantu Education²⁷” that was forced onto black people in the apartheid era. As a result many of the students prefer to opt out of agricultural and technical training and focus on the more “academic” subjects, which are believed to pave the way for a white collar career on completion of studies. Obviously, this is more appealing to the masses of previously oppressed black people.

There are high expectations for radical and fundamental change at *Wagpos* from department officials. It seems that these expectations may turn to disappointment and alienation of the school if there is a failure to effect change. My belief is that the failure of department officials to understand the prevailing conditions at *Wagpos* is related to the fact that they “tend to overlook or ignore the continuities inherited from the past, or else to ‘telescope’ the past in order to draw simple and finished conclusions to particular problems that need to be resolved” (Mc Culloch 1998).

The school boasts an experienced teaching staff of 32 in total, 20 of whom are male and 12 are female. At least six of the teachers were themselves students at the school and have returned to teach there. Two of the teachers had very proudly informed me that their children had matriculated at *Wagpos* as well. At least four of the teachers including the principal reside on the school premises. The impression one gets is that this is a very close-knit community of teachers, students and parents.

Six of the total staff comprises the school management team. A total of 28 of the educators are remunerated by the Department of Education whilst the remaining four have been employed by the school governing body and are remunerated from the school fees. All the staff are professionally qualified and have a range of teaching experience. Four of the staff members have less than 10 years of experience, six have between 10 to 15 years, 14 have between 15 and 20 years and six have more than 20 years of experience. The principal has a

²⁷ The Bantu Education Act of 1953 led to an education for blacks, especially Africans, characterised by under spending, lack of facilities, overcrowded classrooms and unqualified or poorly qualified teachers.

secretary and there are several personnel (employed on a half-day basis) who provide administrative support and backup for the principal and teachers.

Wagpos has had to deal with the various complexities confronting teachers within the context of the rapidly changing educational scenario. These complexities included having to deal simultaneously with macro-educational policy changes (such as the introduction of a new outcomes-based education curriculum) and the practical implementation constraints within the school. The attitudes of the teachers varied and can be related in many ways to their own deeply entrenched Afrikaner philosophies. The majority appear to be unconsciously or (perhaps?) consciously subscribing to ritualised practices, fermented during the apartheid era. The possibility of enacting transformatory visions of education is often thwarted by these constraints.

Learners come from areas that may be described as being of average socio-economic status (mainly middle and working class families). The academic standard of the majority of the learners on entry to the school is described as being average or below average. *Wagpos* obtained an overwhelming 100 percent pass rate in 2001²⁸ and 92,5 percent pass-rate in 2002. The internal examinations also yielded an impressive 95 percent pass rate in 2001 and 90,2 percent pass rate in 2002 (see table below)²⁹.

Grade	No. of learners		No. failed		% failed		% passed	
	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002
Grade 8	139	125	0	12	0	9.6	100	90.4
Grade 9	123	134	0	5	0	3.8	100	96.2
Grade 10	149	125	16	16	10.7	12.8	89.3	87.2
Grade 11	114	134	10	17	8.8	14.2	91.2	85.8
Total number	525	504	26	50				
Total %					5.0	9.8	95.0	90.2

Table 4.1: Pass rate for internal examinations for 2001 and 2002

The school has policies for remedial intervention regarding major learning difficulties that learners may experience. Such interventions include the use of an educational psychologist

²⁸ <http://intranet.nwpg/departments/deptedu/rep>

²⁹ School logbook

who visits the school on a weekly basis, special additional classes for learners who are hostel based and a full-time school counsellor. Of the school learner population of 621, 507 are male and 114 female. The entire school population is white with the exception of two black females and one black male. In the grounds of the school during informal times you will find students most frequently separated by gender – boys seem to stay with boys and, likewise, girls with girls.

The average student-teacher ratio is 32:1. There are sufficient classrooms to house all the learners, though some pre-fabricated classrooms have been erected. Classrooms are not crowded, and in all classrooms there are enough desks. There is a hall and assemblies are held there.

The normal school day at *Wagpos* begins at 07:00 and ends at 13:00. Extracurricular activities are pursued on a daily basis till at least 17:00 on most days. On Monday afternoons, learners work on the farms in small groups, taking part in different activities on a rotational basis. Activities include cleaning the stables, moving hay from the fields to the storage areas, milking cows, preparing compost, bagging compost, working within the nursery and on the farm, and repairing irrigation equipment. The pictures below depict learners at work on the school farms.



#16 Photograph: (2002) “Learners working in the nursery, potting plants which are sold to the public”.



#17 Photograph: (2002) “Learners at work on the compost heap”.



#18 Photograph: (2002) “Learners hard at work cleaning out animal droppings from the pen”.



#19 Photograph: (2002) “Hay gathered from the fields and being transported to the storage area”.



#20 Photograph: (2002) “Learners repairing irrigation equipment”.

One of the distinguishing features of the school is the two enormous rugby fields that one encounters on arrival at the school. The school participates in regular inter-school rugby and athletics and has excelled in these two codes of sport. Other codes of sport that the school engages in include cricket, netball, softball, golf, swimming and shooting.



#21 Photograph: (2002) “Rugby fields at *Wagpos*”.



#22 Photograph: (2002) “Learners involved in tennis training”.

Learners are also exposed to the dramatic arts and talent is showcased through many school plays and concerts held throughout the year. The teachers at *Wagpos* also staged a play for all to enjoy during 2002.



#23 Photograph: (2002) “School concert”.

In addition to the basic subjects that are offered at all schools, *Wagpos* also offers specialised technical and agricultural subjects. Animal Husbandry, which is offered at the school, is extremely popular among the learners. The picture below depicts a group of learners actively engaged in a practical session of establishing the extent of gestation of calves.



#24 Photograph: (2002) “Female learner engaged in a practical session to establish the gestation period of the unborn calf”.



#25 Photograph: (2002) “Learner welding iron to make a drinking basin for animals”.

There are a few teaching aids in the school: overhead projectors, televisions and computers. There are science laboratories with equipment in stock although some of the equipment is old and needs to be replaced. There is, however, an inadequate stock of chemicals for routine experiments. There is a school library with very few books in it; most of them are tattered and in very poor condition and rather dated. Reference books and books that can be used for research purposes are extremely few and very outdated.

Facilities at the school had been upgraded especially for the use of the hostel students who are frequently required to conduct research for various projects. At present there is a total of 24 computers, all of which are equipped with internet facilities. The nearest public library is based in Brits town making it virtually impossible for hostel-based learners to gain access to these facilities. Learners from *Wagpos* have had the opportunity to attend other inter-governmental initiatives such as the Aids Awareness Campaign and the Afrikaans week held at the University of Pretoria.

Teachers, however, do not have many facilities at their disposal. The nearest teacher resource centre is in Pretoria.

There is a school uniform – white blouses and green skirts (or green pants in winter) for girls, green pants, green shirts for Grades 8 to 10, white shirts for Grade 10 to 12, and ties

for boys, green jerseys and blazers – 100 percent of the students come to school in their uniforms. The timetable, developed by the principal and the Heads of Department, runs on a seven-day cycle, with 35 minute periods. Teachers' free periods average eight to ten per cycle, with Heads of Department having between 14 to 18 periods per cycle free.

Problems have been experienced at the school as regards the discipline of learners despite Inside the school buildings, the entrance boasts several framed awards on the walls for athletic successes in inter-school competitions. The staff room is a long room, with tables (covered with tablecloths) and chairs running along all the sides. Teachers tend to sit in the same places every day. The notice board has some outdated notices of courses and workshops being offered by in-service projects, current and old notices about sports fixtures, and notices from the Department of Education dated about six to eight months earlier. Current community activities are also displayed on the notice board.

Each institution's unique culture is influenced by its own particular history. The school received a state subsidy up until 1994 after which this was terminated. At present the main source of income is from school fees and hostel fees. School fees for the 2003 year are R2300-00, having increased slightly from R2000-00 in 2002. Hostel fees have also increased from R5760-00 in 2001, to R7080-00. However, hostel fees at *Wagpos* are comparatively cheaper than urban schools probably because crops harvested from the school gardens are utilised by the learners occupying the hostels. Also, additional income is generated through the sale of milk and crops harvested on the farm.

The school takes responsibility for the consequences of its decisions through a structured and highly effective system of governance and problem solving that calls for the participation of parents and learners. The school has an officially elected governing body, which provides the school with strategic leadership predominantly in the area of farming methodology and financial management. The school governing body meets on a quarterly basis and occasionally on an ad hoc basis when there are urgent matters to discuss. Members of the governing body are dedicated and tend to concentrate mainly on the financial management of the school. Very little pedagogical support is obtained from the school governing body. Most of the governing body members are themselves owners of smallholdings or are engaged in moderate or large-scale farming in and around the area. Of particular significance is the fact that there is no recognised parents association designed to help the school in fundraising activities, but parents do assist on an ad-hoc basis. The school has described its link with the local community as "strong". When parents meetings

are held, they are generally attended by many parents. The school does have a functional Learner Representative Council, which makes a significant contribution towards the ethos of the school.

Problems have been experienced at the school as regards the discipline of learners despite the existence of a clearly defined discipline policy. The phenomenon of deviant adolescent behaviour, including bullying, refusal to attend school and other forms of juvenile delinquency, has surfaced in alarmingly high proportions. Many teachers are of the opinion that learners with problems are sent to schools such as *Wagpos*, which have hostel facilities. Generally the academically outstanding learners pursue their high school career in Pretoria where the opportunities are greater. *Wagpos* does, however, have a few “shining stars”.

Each institution’s unique culture is influenced by its own particular biographical history, social context, resource availability, ideological leanings and curriculum practices. Thus cultural ethos at *Wagpos* is established as a consequence of the many intersecting influences. The first thing that I observed about the prevailing organisational culture at *Wagpos* is the powerful role of centralised authority within the school. Staff meetings are held daily at the start of each day. The principal draws up the agenda, and the meetings usually relate to the nitty-gritty of running the school. The principal is seen as the leader who has the best ideas on any problem encountered. In fact most solutions are proposed (imposed?) by him and accepted – without any challenge. Very seldom do other members of the management team (almost all of whom are male) make contributions in meetings. Consultation with the staff about decisions is mostly so that the staff can rubber stamp the decisions which have already been made. This has a dampening effect on the institutional culture and the individuals within it: it reduces them, that is, the teachers to powerless observers of a centralised process. Furthermore, it reinforces the notion that authority vests in seniority and that no one should deviate from this.

The management style is one, which focuses on administrative efficiency, with the emphasis on paperwork being done timeously. Teachers’ record books are handed in to the principal regularly and he scans them and returns them with minimal comment. He usually visits teachers’ classes when there have been problems or complaints, but otherwise his attitude is one of leaving the teachers to get on with their work. His excellent administrative skills result in the relatively smooth run school.

The relationship between the staff continues to intrigue me. The women teachers have their “corner” in the staff room where they generally converge whilst the men have their own territory. Relationships between the teachers tend to be fairly relaxed. Many are on first-name terms with one another. There are some definite staff cliques. Young teachers find it very difficult to express their views about anything controversial and male teachers tend to be more dominant than females.

Teachers tend to arrive in the staff room soon after the break bell has rung and to leave often immediately after the end of break. Tea breaks are short and do not leave much time for discussions. However, staff room chatter tends to be mainly about problematic students within school life. For the rest, conversations relate to life outside the school, weekend activities, topical discussions and general gossip. There are frequent murmurings about the unreasonable expectations on teachers. Many teachers express their frustrations and there is a tendency to identify problems and issues without the commitment to finding solutions to them.

Despite this, there is a strong sense of motivation at the school. One manifestation of this is that much is happening at the school after hours. In this regard, the first and second terms were the busiest because of sporting activities and meetings. Another manifestation is that there is an extremely low rate of absenteeism – there is seldom a day when even one teacher is absent.

The attitude of staff towards learners was also something that I observed with much fascination. Teachers were generally patient with learners and both parties practised mutual trust and understanding.

There is no staff development programme at school, but some teachers are engaged in studying for postgraduate Bachelor of Education or Master of Education degrees. A few teachers voluntarily attend non-formal courses offered by in-service projects. Professional development thus depends entirely on the commitment of individual teachers. There is a strong positive orientation to change and improve as individuals and as a school community.

What is clear is that the world in which *Wagpos* operates is manifestly complex, uncertain, paradoxical and chaotic. Staff have found themselves concentrating on one initiative and then find themselves sideswiped by another. Competing mandates pull them in different directions, for example, implementation of the development appraisal policy commenced at the school but after a few months several problems were identified with the practical implementation of this initiative, which was then suspended. Despite this, the principal continues to conduct formal appraisal of all teachers at the school using his own system and timetable. Staff have described themselves as “living on the edge of chaos”. What is acknowledged is that the source of that chaos is not all a natural or spontaneous effect of contingent events, but that part of it also has a clear and identifiable political basis.

Like all historically Afrikaans schools, *Wagpos* has a long legacy of compliance with political and bureaucratic authority. Therefore it is not surprising that when the department identified *Wagpos* for the evaluation, the school accepted and was prepared to continue with the process even though other schools in the province did not allow the evaluation teams to enter their schools. *Wagpos* was at the time the only school in the province where the evaluation took place. This can be viewed in two ways: that co-operation with the department is important but being critically engaged with the department over unresolved issues (i.e. WSE and DAS policies) is also important. The school’s response to the department’s evaluation does not differ much from the historical ways of complying with political authority.

There is a deep-seated culture of *beleefdheid*, in which there is a strong institutional aversion to conflict and disagreement (Jansen 2001a). There is usually a push for consensus (usually accepting only that what the staff is used to over the years) and the school tends to adopt those practices they are used to. In so doing, opportunities for achieving transformation are further eroded.

4.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have placed the school in its social and changing historical context, from the 1920s through to the present. In this retrospective account I have highlighted the fascinating dynamics and punctuated these with photographic evidence to better situate the reader in the particular timeframes.

Wagpos is part of a larger contextual network of institutions – part of a circuit, district and province – and is influenced by community organisations and teacher unions, among other formal and informal organisations. Effecting change within *Wagpos* may be difficult especially if the innovation being introduced is not supported by these organisations. Clearly, the parent community plays a significant role in contributing to the ethos of *Wagpos*. Although the school is considered to be a forerunner in education activities the school usually contacts the district office when authority is required on particular issues. As Fullan (1991) indicates, schools cannot redesign themselves without assistance and support

The role of the district is crucial. Individual schools can become highly innovative for short periods of time without the district, but they cannot stay innovative without the district action to establish the conditions for continuous and long term improvement (p209).

Cultural ethos within the ambit of a school is highly volatile. Sirotnik (1998:186-7) argues that roles, expectations, rituals, regularities, beliefs and motives shift in context, that is, within organisations which are seen as *cultural ecologies*. These ideas might combine to facilitate or inhibit innovation and change. The ecology of the social system might react to deliberate interventions, whether from the inside or out. The historical portrait of *Wagpos* reveals a school, which at its inception embraced the Christian National Education philosophy, and to date continues to practice the Christian philosophy. A deep culture of compliance to political and bureaucratic authority exists – relatively intact over the years. *Wagpos* has maintained a “patterned way of behaviour”. It is not ironical then that *Wagpos* responded positively to implement both WSE and DAS – despite the controversy facing the WSE policy.

Within this context, where hierarchical authority structure is alive and well, values, goals and understandings about what is required when a new reform is introduced are passed from the principal down to the teachers who do not resist as the principal is seen as a figure of authority. But the introduction of new reforms may unearth previously hidden differences on fundamental issues among teachers and impact on policy implementation – only time will tell. Will teachers at *Wagpos* who are being bombarded by an unrelenting plethora of changes over a short period of time, find it possible to keep up their energy, enthusiasm and, ultimately, willingness for change? Goodwill and faith in process may not

be sufficient as unexplored assumptions and differences in understandings can fuel and frustrate the change process.

In this rather densely packed chapter I have also sketched how the school has put processes in place to stimulate change and how they have tried to manage change over the years. Changes in school culture cannot be imposed upon the school (Sarason 1996). Change occurs because those who will be affected by it are able to decide for themselves the future that they will work towards. *Wagpos* and many other similar schools are Neanderthals whose cultures evolved in one set of climatic and ecological context. They are generally unable to rapidly adjust or adapt to the requirements of a new order. But despite the monumental difficulties experienced this conservative “white” school has displayed a positive orientation towards change under the new “black” ANC government. The teachers in particular, although appearing to prefer that which is “familiar”, continue in their quests to grow and develop as individuals, sometimes having to overcome the strong forces of continuity which coalesce to prevent significant changes in the school’s structures and culture.

In these turbulent times *Wagpos* continues to negotiate change with strong determination towards achieving excellence – “volhard³⁰” – aligned to the motto of the school. While they continue in their attempts to achieve “deep change”, there will be a lot of trial and error, even with collaborative planning, constant assessment and the considerable wealth of experience of the staff. In the next chapter I will turn to explain how the various stakeholders, including the principal and staff at *Wagpos*, understand the WSE policy in the school context.

³⁰ “Volhard” is the school motto which means to strive with determination.

Chapter Five

Exploring the Tensions between Official Intentions and Stakeholder Understandings of Education Policy: The Case of Whole School Evaluation

5.1 Introduction

How do various stakeholders in the school environment understand WSE policy? In dealing with this research question two other policies, that is, Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) and Systemic Evaluation (SE) were also brought into conversation because these competing evaluation policies, which are intended to change the understandings and attitudes of practitioners by defining the ends of evaluations as professional development and school improvement, are to be implemented simultaneously in the school context. My intention in this chapter is to first highlight continuities and contradictions between the policies and then capture the tensions and continuities between official intentions (as expressed in documents) and those reflected in stakeholder understandings of the WSE policy.

If we are to consider seriously the issues affecting policy implementation especially in this case where there are multiple role-players, it is essential to consider the perceptions of individuals at various points in the implementation chain. I therefore explore the evaluation policy intentions: as expressed in documents; as explained by National, Provincial and District officials; as expressed by policy developers; as explained by union officials and as understood by the principal and teachers in the case study school.

I have decided to disaggregate the data into two categories, that is, a broad category, which includes the policymaker (consultant), union officials and Department officials and a second category comprising those individuals operating within the ambit of the school, that is, the principal and teachers. I have done this with three objectives in mind. Firstly, it will make for easy comparisons between the two categories. Secondly, keeping the school data on teacher understandings “intact” will allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about the practitioners’ understandings and subsequent influence (if any) on policy

Chapter Five

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implementation in *Wagpos*. I have argued in Chapter Two that poor understanding of policy by the implementers was one of the critical reasons for poor/failed implementation. Thirdly, it also signals my intention to force an engagement with the silences that have served to “sweep under the carpet” issues that have yet to be settled, such as the influence of the different categories of role-players, especially in the WSE policy implementation at *Wagpos*.

I have arranged this chapter into three sections. In **Section One**, I will analyse the three publicly available evaluation documents, that is, WSE, DAS and the Assessment Policy for Grades R to 9 in which mention is made of SE. I provide a conceptual section in which I describe the framework I use in the analysis of the policy documents and I analyse the policy documents based on the questions posed in the document analysis schedule (Appendix M). The focus of the analysis will be on the intentions of the policies, the continuities and contradictions between the WSE policy and the related evaluation policies, and the implementation plans for these policies. I have supplemented this section with data from interviews conducted with national officials and the consultant involved in the development of the WSE policy. Interviews were taped and later transcribed. Transcripts were analysed for those aspects that bear reference particularly to the historical development of the WSE policy.

In **Section Two**, I will document brief narratives of semi-structured interviews conducted with a policymaker (consultant), Department officials (policymakers and implementers) and union officials. The spread of stakeholders interviewed served to reduce bias as well as allowed these individuals an opportunity to provide their perspectives from their various portfolios. Included in this section is data obtained from district officials’ free writing schedules (source of triangulation).

In **Section Three**, I present the data pertaining to individuals in the school context and a statistical analysis of the information available from the questionnaire administered to the management and staff at the case study school. I document narratives of interviews conducted with the staff and include data obtained from teachers’ free writing schedules (corroboratory source).

In both Sections Two and Three, I cast my focus on the stakeholder understandings and conceptions of the WSE policy because it is my contention that stakeholder understandings of policy, amongst other variables, influence the way policy is implemented in a given context. In this case, a context where there are competing policy influences and a readiness to receive and manage change.

Finally, I will summarise each section of this chapter by comparing patterns and trends that develop with the intentions of the evaluation policies as expressed in the policy documents, as explained by department officials, union officials and policymakers and as understood by the principal and teachers at *Wagpos* High school. I note the mismatch between policy expectations as revealed from a literal analysis of policy and in the understanding of the stakeholders interviewed. Having established the level of policy understanding among the various stakeholders in this chapter, I proceed in the next chapter to explain how policy implementation unfolds in the school context.

Section One

5.1.1 Policy intentions: evidence from documents

Methodological considerations

In this section I will explore the intentions of WSE, DAS and SE as expressed in official documents. In presenting a methodological framework to achieve this, I draw on the literature on policy and policy analysis. Policy analysis is a form of inquiry that provides either the informational base upon which policy is constructed or the critical examination of existing policies. The former has been called analysis *for* policy, whereas the latter has been called analysis *of* policy (Gordon, Lewis & Young 1977:27). Analysis of policy can take two different forms: firstly, analysis of policy determination and effects, which examines the “inputs and transformational processes operating upon the construction of public policy” and also the effects of such policies on various groups; and secondly, analysis of policy content, which examines the values, assumptions and ideologies underpinning the policy process (Gordon et al 1977:28). My analysis rests more heavily on the analysis of policy.

* At the time of the development of the WSE policy, I was employed in the National Department. I also contributed towards the policy development by providing comments on the various drafts of the policy.

Theoretical arguments for the analysis of policy range from the rational model (Simon 1957, March & Simon 1958) to critical policy analysis. Given that the policy process is messy, a rational approach to the process is simplistic and limited. Hence critical approaches are more appropriate. I use critical policy analysis drawing heavily from post-structural constructs of discourse analysis, power and knowledge to begin to understand things. As Ball (1990:18) points out, recent theoretical developments around post-structuralism offer “a new set of tools to begin to explain things”. Post-structuralists suggest that there is a close nexus between power and knowledge, and that meaning is constructed historically in contested social domains (Foucault 1980).

The framework of Taylor Rizvi, Lingard & Henry (1997) is useful for critical policy analysis. They see critical policy analysis as a focus on, firstly, understanding the context in which a policy arises; secondly, evaluating how the policymaking process is arranged; thirdly, assessing the content in terms of a particular set of educational values; fourthly, assessing whose interest the policy serves; fifthly, exploring how it might contribute to policy advocacy; and sixthly, examining how the policy has been implemented and with what outcomes and so on. I find this framework offers a more comprehensive and encompassing view of the forces (e.g. politics, pressure, conflict) and factors operating in the dynamics of the policymaking process.

Analysis of the Whole School Evaluation policy document

“Politics and personalities”

I begin with the policy analysis by first concentrating on the *historical origins*³¹ of the policy. According to Taylor et al (1997), there is always a prior history of significant events, the particular ideological and political climate, social and economic context as well as particular individuals that together influence the shape and timing of policies as well as their evolution and their outcomes. When South Africa became a democracy, a massive re-engineering of the education system followed with the introduction of outcomes based education. A major criticism of the approach was that a parallel mechanism for monitoring and evaluating performance did not accompany this change. When the Directorate: Quality

³¹ At the time of the development of the WSE policy I was employed in the National Department. I also contributed towards the policy development by providing comments on the various drafts of the policy.

Assurance was established in May 1997, an audit was conducted in all nine provinces to ascertain what systems existed, if any, to monitor and evaluate performance. The audit revealed that there were stark contrasts in the different provinces:

*The policymaker explained that there were no specific areas in the policy that were difficult to implement. Subject advisors and curriculum implementers, in some instances were simply used as educated messengers taking documentation from one office to another, from the offices to schools and all that. At the end of the day there was **no** focus on the monitoring and evaluation of the system (Tom³² 07/06/2002).*

The impetus for the introduction of monitoring and evaluation systems was the audit. The DoE then assigned the key responsibility for the development of the WSE policy, supporting documents and a training manual to a United Kingdom (UK) based consultant. The rationale for this choice is captured in this DoE official's comment:

... the United Kingdom is one of the countries that has got one of the longest extending traditions for inspection, but in our case we were not looking for inspection. We were looking for another perspective that we could look into in order to come up with a South African model for evaluation of our schools (Tom 07/06/2002).

The policymaker recounted that the WSE was a much bigger enterprise than was realised by the DoE at the inception of the project. He initially presented a statement of intent rather than policy to the National Quality Assurance Co-ordinating Committee (NQACC), which was then regarded as the forum in which "open" sharing of information occurred. The NQACC meetings were initially poorly attended but with time, and as ideas began to gel, representation at these meetings improved and the NQACC became strongly rooted as the critical forum for quality assurance related matters (NAPTOSA official 19/04/2002).

Policy development work proceeded in a number of stages during which follow-up suggestions were received by the policymaker and subsequent improvements effected. In addition, serious discussions on the implications of the WSE policy for national and provincial education structures were also initiated in the NQACC forum, which was held regularly (once or twice a term). Throughout the policy development process the National Department of Education played a pivotal role in disseminating reports on pilots of certain

³² Note that pseudonyms are used in the text. The exception is in the case of provincial evaluators.

evaluation initiatives (e.g. SE) that was being undertaken at the time, providing workshops and specific training.

The policymaker registered that there were no specific areas in the policy that were difficult to conceptualise but expressed that there was some difficulty experienced with regard to establishing the criteria and developing instruments to support the policy. Attention had to be given to various concepts used (reflected in the glossary) but not all concepts were clearly explained and he conceded that he had to strike a fine balance between being as brief as possible and explaining only “certain” of the concepts contained in the policy. No specific cross-referencing with other policies was done because “*WSE does not interfere with other policies*” (PM³³ 11/01/2002). According to him, WSE does provide a clearer focus on what is required in terms of staff development and this is not seen to be contrary to the DAS as it supports the idea that there should be a system in place, which enables educators to make progress in their professional development.

Unsurprisingly, the policymaker acknowledged that there was “policy borrowing” from the United Kingdom experience of inspections. He drew heavily from his own experiences of having served as a member of Her Majesties Inspectorate (HMI). In addition, the OFSTED Framework was used but there has been a more deliberate attempt to build on the developmental aspect of the evaluation. Presently, OFSTED inspectors conduct inspections for a week and then leave and what follows is the responsibility of the authority. In the South African context, the responsibility will lie with the school and the district to prepare a school development plan. A second deviation from the United Kingdom model is that the external evaluation team is much smaller, comprising three to four people (maximum eight). In the United Kingdom model the size of the team depends on whether a full evaluation or a brief evaluation is to be conducted at the identified school. The policymaker openly conceded that small teams may or may not work. Another notable difference is that in the United Kingdom approximately 10 000 individuals were trained to cover as many schools as there are in South Africa, in comparison with a cohort of about 200 evaluators initially trained in South Africa. This number has been steadily increasing as each province embarks on training supervisors.

³³ PM is used throughout to refer to the United Kingdom based policymaker/consultant who was tasked with the development of the WSE policy.

Consultations included officials at different levels of the bureaucracy- the Deputy Director General and Chief Director of Quality Assurance at the National Department as well as Heads of Departments within the provinces. The policymaker's view of the process was as follows:

I met with them to explain the process. They made one or two comments and asked questions – whether they recognised the significance for their departments – I doubt (PM 11/01/2002).

Unions were also invited as active partners during the development of the policy. Inputs were channelled both through the provincial member unions and national. Accordingly, a NAPTOSA official explained that they had submitted numerous documents with their inputs on the policy framework as well as suggestions for an implementation strategy, the contents of which were incorporated into the final draft of the WSE policy.

We suggested quality assurance and quality management. We tried to find things that are positive and don't know if we can claim sole credit for this but we like to think it was one of the elements (NAPTOSA official 19/04/2002).

The policymaker, however, dismissed the claims that SADTU had not been adequately consulted responding that:

A SADTU union official had attended the training courses presented by me. He (the union representative) accepted that he couldn't see any problems as far as SADTU was concerned (PM 11/01/2002).

Other opportunities that the union had for interaction with role-players in the policy development process were at the national conference for WSE held in September 2002. Attempts were made to engage SADTU on policy issues during the conference:

I know that I did speak informally with representatives of SADTU at that particular conference as I was anxious to build bridges, to be honest as I could see the anxiety, and I offered that I was willing to speak to SADTU about WSE and that offer is still on – even though I admit I was stepping beyond my means (PM 11/01/2002).

Advocacy for WSE involved visits to various provinces and meetings with key role-players (including principals, teachers, learners and school governing bodies of 12 pilot schools in each of seven provinces) which resulted in valuable inputs being noted for incorporation

into the final draft. The specifics of the policy were agreed on at the NQACC forum and it was then passed through to the Directorate: Quality Assurance before it was sent to the Minister of Education for approval and gazetting³⁴.

According to the policymaker, there were some problems that were experienced during the policy development stage. The distance (i.e. being based in the UK) sometimes made it difficult to work effectively especially when amendments to the draft had to be effected after presentations to the NQACC. Clear timeframes for delivery had to be communicated and agreed upon and this did not happen often. According to the policymaker:

The Department found itself not being able to confirm dates because of negotiations it had to engage in with funding agencies hence the policy development process had to be stalled. Tensions between individuals at the different levels also contributed to delays in the process (PM 11/02/2002).

The policymaking process did involve a careful balance between the “politics and personalities” of the key role-players in the policymaking arena.

Rationale for WSE

The policy document states that for several years there has been no national system of evaluating the performance of schools, and there is no comprehensive data on the quality of teaching and learning or on the educational standards achieved in the system. As a result, the national policy for WSE was introduced. This policy together with accompanying guidelines places emphasis on the use of objective criteria and performance indicators in the evaluation of schools. The multi-sources of evidence will be used to enable valid and reliable judgements to be made and sound feedback to be provided both to schools and to the decision-makers.

The policy document is silent about the fact that WSE may have been introduced as a result of most schools having become dysfunctional, a decline in matriculation results over the years or as a result of pressure from parents calling for government to introduce greater accountability measures for educators.

³⁴ The Whole School Evaluation policy was gazetted on the 6 September 2000, gazette number 21539.

Goals of WSE

Rigorous analysis of the document reveals that the explicit and implied goals of WSE are as follows:

- Spell out the criteria that will be employed to evaluate the effectiveness of a school in terms of the national goals;
- Establish mechanisms to strengthen district professional support services to schools;
- Increase the level of accountability within the system;
- Provide feedback for continuous quality improvement;
- Moderate externally, on a sampling basis, the results of self-evaluation carried out by the schools;
- Identify pockets of excellence within the system which will serve as models of good practice; and
- Identify the characteristics of an effective school and improve the general understanding of what factors create effective schools (DoE 2000:11).
- There would be overall school improvement if the policy is properly implemented (implied goal).

The policy document rests heavily on a number of underlying assumptions. Some of the assumptions are that:

- teachers will view this policy in a positive light and will willingly adopt its principles;
- the in-service training undertaken by staff will equip them to implement the policy as expected;
- schools have the ability to sharpen their skills in conducting self-evaluation;
- all schools will appoint an evaluation co-ordinator to liaise with monitoring and evaluation teams;
- guidelines, criteria and instruments have been designed to ensure consistency over periods of time and across settings;
- districts have competent human resources to provide mentoring and support to the schools;

- district-based support teams have the physical resources to lend support to the process;
- the roles and duties of district-based teams are clearly identified and known to all officials;
- the accredited supervisors have received the necessary training and are in a position to conduct the evaluations;
- there are sufficient accredited evaluators balanced across the nine focus areas to carry out the evaluations in each school;
- there is a systematic way of integrating the data received from WSE, DAS and SE to prepare a comprehensive profile of performance for each school;
- the necessary information communication technology infrastructure in all the provinces has been established and can be easily linked to the database of the national ministry;
- provinces have budgeted for the WSE process and have proactively put in place policies designed to provide appropriate support, guidance, advice and resources to all district professional services to enable them to assist schools;
- schools have effectively functioning and competent school governing bodies that play an active role in the WSE process;
- supervisors and other stakeholders will observe certain ethical issues and abide by the prescribed code; and
- WSE data will assist to re-orientate efforts towards improving the quality and standards of individual and collective performance.

Theory of action: All things bright and beautiful?

The WSE policy framework may be hailed as a major milestone as it sets the tone for not only building capacity but also for accounting for capacity built. The policy is, however, naïve with regard to a number of issues which I will highlight in my subsequent discussion on the proposed theory of action. Like most policies, it appears to be no more than a statement of intent. The approach to be adopted raises concerns of whether this would be more of a “fixing the parts” approach rather than a “fixing the system” approach bearing in mind the many backlogs inherited as a result of the evils of apartheid.

According to the WSE policy, *“the focus is on both internal monitoring and external evaluation, i.e. the self-evaluation by the school, and external evaluation by the supervisory units, and the mentoring and support provided by the district-based support teams”* (p3). This indicates that there are clear distinctions being made between monitoring (which is done by the school), mentoring and support (conducted by district support teams) and evaluation (which is done by supervisory units). These responsibilities are located at the micro, meso and macro levels in the province. The roles identified are contradictory to those stated later in the policy where *“provinces should budget for whole school evaluation and enable **district support teams** to carry out ongoing **monitoring**, support and development activities in schools”*.

The policy document also states that *“quality assurance allows external evaluations to become effective only when schools have effective well-developed internal self-evaluation processes”* (p5). The burning question that emerges is: Who will ensure this and what criteria will be used to determine schools that are prepared?

Another issue is that provinces are responsible for the design of policies to provide, *“administrative support, advice, guidance and resources to all its district professional services to enable them to help schools to respond to recommendations emanating from external evaluations”* (p11). Many will argue that professional support is more desperately required compared with administrative support. What measures will be put into place to monitor quality control, that is, same across provinces and districts?

The way in which the capacity required for the process will be dealt with is that *“supervisory units (directly managed by the Quality Assurance Directorate or its equivalent in provinces) will be responsible for providing a full-time team of evaluators assisted by district based support team members”* (p12). There is no clarity whether “full-time” refers to permanently employed personnel in the DoE or consultants contracted full-time for the purpose. There are far-reaching implications if permanently employed DoE officials are utilised for this purpose.

Furthermore, *“modular training and induction courses will be offered for all supervisors, including district based support teams until sufficient members have been registered on the database”* (p16). Does this mean that officials from district-based support teams will also

be registered on the database as being competent to perform evaluations? If so, what is the purpose, considering that they are not involved in either the self-evaluation or the external evaluation of schools? The policy further states that, *“once they have received training, all supervisors will be registered on the Ministry’s database”* (p16). The assumption being made is that all supervisors that receive training will be competent enough to conduct evaluations. A glaring omission in this scheme is who will moderate the supervisors? There should at least be a national moderation team.

Supervisory units are also charged with responsibility of *“formulating policies designed to ensure the implementation of recommendations to improve standards in under-performing schools”* (p12). Given the samples that are chosen it remains questionable whether it would be possible to generalise findings and hence embark on generic strategies to improve standards in all under-performing schools.

The policy further states that *“teams comprising expertise in general school management, leadership, governance, curriculum, staff development, and financial planning must be constituted in the districts. They are responsible for monitoring and supporting schools on an ongoing basis for purposes of continuous quality improvement”* (p12). These are exceptionally high expectations given the evidence that we have concerning the lack of capacity in districts in previously disadvantaged areas (DoE 2001a). The policy goes on to state that these teams *“must render services to the supervisory units”*. The policy is silent on the exact type of *“services”* that must be rendered. District support services are also responsible for *“ensuring the availability of adequate transport, travel and subsistence budget for the District Support Teams”* (p12). Again this seems impossible to provide given the present accounting structure in most districts and if no concerted effort is made in injecting much needed funds into districts for this purpose then this might not be possible.

District Support Teams will have to use the *“reports from the supervisory teams to hold discussions with the schools and guide them in the implementation of the recommendations”* (p13). It may be argued that since the district support team was not involved in conducting the evaluation it might be problematic for them to assist in the implementation of the recommendations. Also, the policy is silent on the issue of *“Who evaluates the support being provided by the district?”* Throughout the document there are a number of implied roles and functions of districts. Interestingly, districts do not have

nationally agreed upon roles and functions and therefore may not be able to make a meaningful contribution to the process unless their functions are clarified.

The principal of the school is responsible for *“the undertaking of the school’s self-evaluation activities in line with the requirements of the National Policy and Guidelines on Whole School Evaluation”* (p13). S/he is also expected to, *“identify an evaluation co-ordinator to liaise with all the monitoring and evaluation teams that visit the school”* as well as produce *“an improvement plan in response to recommendations made in the evaluation report within four weeks of the receipt of the written evaluation report”* (p13). All the activities listed appear to be in line with the process but it is difficult to understand why the principal is then expected to send the *“improvement plan to the District Head for approval”*, considering that the Head was never a part of the evaluation process. Again, this points to the fact there may be unreasonable expectations placed on districts. If this is to be maintained then it would only make sense to involve the District Head early in the evaluation.

The document is riddled with terms that are used inconsistently, for example supervisors, teams and evaluators. The terms “teams” and “evaluators” are not even contained in the glossary of terms.

Another criticism is the absence of evaluation criteria for the specific curricular subjects in the WSE model. This needs to be addressed if change is to be effected at classroom level. An increasing body of evidence (Scheerens & Bosker 1997; Taylor Fitz-Gibbon 1996) suggests that differential effectiveness exists in schools and that the significant variance among pupils’ achievements can be attributed to differences at classroom rather than whole-school level. Furthermore, there is a body of evidence from the school effectiveness research, which suggests that pupils’ performance may be high in one subject and low in another. How might a model such as WSE, dedicated to improving learning processes and outcomes at school level, accommodate the inherent challenge? With its overriding emphasis on overall school performance, can WSE develop strategies to deal with ineffective classroom teaching?

It must be noted that the WSE policy framework is based on an input, process and output model. Technical application of such a model might result in achieving results opposite to what was intended.

Finally, there are two other tensions that are generated in the policy proposals. The first is a tension between school autonomy and state control (Jansen 2001c). It appears that schools are being granted greater autonomy to decide on their own progress and plans for school improvement. The school measures itself through self-evaluation and these results are used as the basis for external evaluations by the external supervisors. There are, however, critical areas in which the school principal and staff are excluded from the evaluation process. For example, the principal may participate in the evaluation process but will not be part of the decision making when judgements about the school are made. The co-operative aspects of the evaluation are listed throughout the policy document while at the same time it is also clear that external evaluators have legal authority to enter and evaluate a school. Even in the case where schools may lay a complaint about *“unfair treatment or unjustified action, the Minister of Education remains the final arbiter in any complaints procedure”* (DoE 2000c).

The second tension in the WSE is between development and accountability (Jansen 2001c). The policy emphasises the positive benefits for school improvement that come through internal and external evaluation. Schools will receive financial assistance and the expertise of well-trained district officials who will monitor and evaluate the school's performance with regard to improvement plans. The problem arises if the school does not attain the levels of performance articulated in school improvement plans. Teachers have dismissed the policy as the inspection system of the apartheid era, which is believed to force schools into compliance with the government's philosophy and curriculum. Although the Minister promises that this policy is *“less punitive”* (DoE 2000c), it is difficult to convince teachers that the policy would not result in some form of reprimand if performance is not as expected.

- General agreement of the guiding principles of the approach;

Analysis of the Developmental Appraisal Strategy (DAS) to be used;

Doctoring together

The impetus for the historical development of the new DAS has been linked to the breakdown of inspectorate and subject advisory services in the majority of schools in South Africa. Between 1985 and 1990 it became almost impossible for inspectors and subject advisors to enter schools. The organised teaching profession identified the need to develop an appraisal instrument, which would be acceptable to all stakeholders and would enhance the development of educator competency and the quality of public education in South Africa.

Through a series of negotiations, research and piloting of the various proposals, in which teacher unions also participated, a document representing the combined efforts of the various stakeholders and embracing the democratisation that is prevalent in education in South Africa was finalised. The desire to restore an appraisal system for educators was, thus, a concern strongly shared by all stakeholders in education.

By 1993, all teacher organisations, unions and all ex-departments of education were involved in these negotiations, which sought to address the principles, processes and procedures for the proposed appraisal system. Various consultative workshops were held at a national level by each of the organisations/departments involved. These resulted in formulation of the “guiding principles” that ought to inform the new appraisal system and the “appraisal instrument” to be used. By 1994, a general agreement by all parties on both these issues was reached.

In October 1994, a conference on School Management, Teacher Development and Support, hosted by the Education Policy Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand, was held at the Eskom Centre in Midrand, Johannesburg. The newly constituted national and provincial departments and all teacher unions/organisations were represented. At this conference the following were among the key issues on the agenda to be resolved:

- General agreement of the guiding principles of the appraisal;

- Overall consensus on the nature of the instrument to be used;
- General agreement on the need to pilot the new appraisal system with the post level 1 educators before it could be implemented.

On the basis of these decisions, the Education Policy Unit of the University of the Witwatersand conducted a pilot of the new appraisal system. This pilot occurred between 1995 and 1996 and a report documenting its findings was released in July 1997.

The pilot covered a representative sample of 93 schools throughout the country, with KwaZulu-Natal (one of the nine provinces) being the only province that did not participate in the pilot owing to a range of difficulties that could not be resolved within the scope of the pilot. The findings of the pilot revealed that there was unanimous support for the nature and processes of the new teacher appraisal system. Whilst it also showed that it could be applied in all schools in South Africa no matter what their contextual conditions might be, it pointed to the centrality of training in the process so that school-based educators are equipped with the necessary knowledge to actually implement the new appraisal system. Furthermore, the pilot indicated that the nature of the new appraisal system contributed significantly to facilitating relations between teachers and school management, and between schools and departmental offices. The pilot, thus, validated empirically the nature, philosophy, processes and instrument of the new appraisal system.

Simultaneously, while the pilot was being conducted, further discussions and negotiations around the new appraisal system were taking place in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) in which teacher unions/organisations, provincial departments and the National Department of Education were involved. On 28th July 1998, a final agreement was reached within the ELRC on the implementation of the new DAS. This agreement is reflected in Resolution Number 4 of 1998. The following was agreed upon by the ELRC:

- It was agreed that the overall nature of the appraisal system that was piloted be maintained. This entails the “guiding principles”, the nature of the appraisal process and the use of “appraisal panels”.
- It was agreed that the “instrument” to be implemented is one that is “developmental” in nature only and will be conducted with all levels of

personnel within education, in and outside of schools, excluding education therapists and psychologists.

- It was agreed that the appraisal will be tied to the nature of job descriptions of the specific level of post which a person may be attached (p52).

In terms of this ELRC resolution the new DAS was expected to be implemented by 1999, with all structural and other arrangements being put in place in 1998. The effectiveness of the system was to be rigorously monitored throughout the implementation process. The DAS was to be reviewed in April 2000.

Rationale for DAS

There had been a complete breakdown of the inspectorate and advisory services in the majority of schools in the country. Within the organised teaching profession it was felt that there was a need to develop an appraisal instrument which would result in the development of competency of educators and improve the quality of public education in South Africa.

Goals for DAS

The explicit aim of this policy is to facilitate the personal and professional development of educators in order to improve the quality of teaching practice and education management.

The policy is based on the *assumptions* that:

- teachers are able to engage in reflective practice and thereafter conduct self-appraisal;
- peer appraisal will be done by a colleague who is informed and capable and that the process will be done in a fair and transparent manner;
- the work programme at schools has factored in time for educators to work together to assist in problem solving, for example, teachers of the same grade to be available at the same time for planning purposes;
- teachers from different institutions involved in teaching a particular learning field will be willing to cooperate and assist in problem solving;
- the support services of the education department are fully functional to provide assistance;

- the members of the panels will work collectively to assist the appraisee to identify needs, formulate objectives, select professional development activities, implement such activities within timeframes and provide timeous feedback;
- each institution will elect a Staff Development Team (SDT);
- panels will be properly constituted with individuals drawn from particular identified groups; and
- the criteria (i.e., core, optional and additional) are understood and applied uniformly.

Theory of action

Developmental appraisal will consist of the following ongoing processes:

- Reflective practice: this is an ongoing activity where the educator will interpret and analyse the extent to which his or her performance meets objectives in serving the needs of clients.
- Self-appraisal: the educator undertakes introspection in terms of his or her own performance, client questionnaire results as well as institution development plans.
- Peer appraisal: a colleague assists the appraisee to review his or her performance with a view to prioritise professional development plans.
- Collaboration: educators work together with a view to assist in problem solving.
- Interaction within panels: relationships will be developed between members to work collectively to assist the appraisee to identify needs and provide the necessary support.

The SDT will initiate, co-ordinate and monitor appraisal in terms of the management plan. To ensure that the process of appraisal is in line with the key job functions, a list of criteria (core, optional and additional) will be applied for the different levels, that is, PL1 educators (classroom-based educators); Heads of Departments; Deputy Principals/Principals and office-based educators (Post Level 1 to 6).

A simple scale will be used to determine areas of priority. In this scale, each criterion is defined and the associated performance expectation is given, that is, A = Priority need for development in given cycle and B = Performance is in keeping with the expectation with room for further development in future cycles. Several forms will be completed during the

appraisal process. A Personal Details Form will be done by the appraisee at the outset, followed by a Needs Identification and Prioritisation Form after the self-appraisal and panel appraisal. A Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Form, showing a plan for development in the cycle is finalised by the panel. Thereafter a Discussion Paper, to review success and difficulties of the PGP in the cycle is completed by the panel followed by an Appraisal report completed by the appraisee and panel members. In terms of Section 3(3), Regulation number R1742 (13 November 1995), the head of an institution or office may confirm the probationary appointment of an educator after a period of at least 12 months on the basis of satisfactory performance.

Cohesive and contradictory goals of WSE, DAS and SE

Analysis of the Systemic Evaluation (SE) policy document

In all three policies the key aim is to identify strengths and weaknesses and to provide

Historical origins of SE

The focus of each document varies, that is, in DAS the teacher is of central importance; in WSE the school is the key focus while in SE the focus

The Assessment Policy for Grade R to 9, released a year after the introduction of Curriculum 2005 and gazetted in December 1998, provides for the conducting of SE at the key transitional stages, viz. Grade 3, 6 and 9. SE will be conducted on a nationally representative sample of learners and learning sites and is an integral part of ensuring that all learners derive maximum benefit from the education system.

approach's "right to have

access to and respond to the appraisal" (2000). As such, the principle states that in the

Goals of SE

with the appraised, done in the democratic and accountable, that the appraisal

reports that are written may be rejected by the appraiser and the report will not be valid.

The main objective is to assess the effectiveness of the entire system and the extent to

which the vision and goals of the education transformation process are being achieved by it.

SE is also a means of determining the strengths and weaknesses of the learning system on a

periodic basis and shall provide feedback to all the role-players so that appropriate action

may be taken to improve the performance of the learning sites and learning system.

Guiding principle number 4 in the DAS document, states that the appraisal process is

Theory of action

and, which should be inclusive of all stakeholders' (2000). This principle

recognizes that the appraisal process is one that is collaborative. At the same time it is

The policy document clearly states that there will be a periodic evaluation of all aspects of

the sites of learning and learning programmes and this will occur at Grades 3, 6 and 9.

Reporting will take the form of a national report card on the learning sites and learning

system, and shall be released by the Minister of Education in consultation with the nine

Members of the Executive Council responsible for education in the provincial departments of education.

The policy document is silent on the implementation process as well as on the extent to which SE at Grade 9 level will be different from the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) exit examination at the same level. A framework document outlining key implementation proposals and guidelines is currently being developed in support of the policy document.

Coherent and contradictory goals of WSE, DAS and SE

In all three policies the key aim is to identify strengths and weaknesses and to provide recommendations for improvement. The focus of each document varies, that is, in DAS the teacher is of central importance; in WSE the school is the key focus whilst in SE the focus is on the system.

WSE policy and DAS policy display a greater degree of convergence. SE differs radically from both these policies. In both DAS and WSE “feedback” is recognised as an indispensable element. Principle number 7 of DAS points to the appraisee’s “right to have access to and respond to the appraisal” (p60). As such, this principle states that if, for whatever reasons the appraisal done is not democratic and accountable, then the appraisal reports that are written may be rejected by the appraisee and the report will not be valid. Similarly, schools have right to register with the office of the Head of Department a complaint when they believe that unfair treatment or unjustified action affecting them has taken place during the evaluation. In the case of WSE, the Minister of Education is the final arbiter in any complaints procedure.

Guiding principle number 4 in the DAS document, states that the appraisal process is conducted by a “panel, which should be inclusive of all stakeholders” (p60). This principle recognises that the appraisal process is one that is collaborative. At the same time it is “inclusive”. The appraisal process is therefore, in principle, a democratic one. Similarly, WSE calls for an “inclusive” approach, that is, it requires that the evaluation process be conducted by supervisory teams comprising of accredited supervisors balanced across the nine focus areas to be evaluated. Members of the team will have the expertise to evaluate

minimally one Subject/Learning Area and have an awareness of the key elements of good provision for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN). These “inclusive” democratic arrangements of appraisal panels within the DAS and WSE process are marked differences from the evaluation of education in the past, which were characteristically top-down, authoritarian and undemocratic.

In the case of DAS, educators’ performances will be appraised from various perspectives taking into account various factors in order to arrive at sound and fair decisions. In the case of WSE, the principal of the school will first conduct self-evaluation and this will be followed by an external evaluation. Thus there is a suggestion that there is sufficient opportunity to reach fair decisions.

One of the principles of WSE is that all evaluation activities must be characterised by openness and collaboration. The criteria to be used in evaluating schools, therefore, must be made public (p12). The guiding principles of DAS also emphasise transparency. Principle number 1 explicitly states that the “process of appraisal should be open and transparent.”(p60)

Guiding principle number 2 of DAS explicitly states that the appraisal of educators is in essence a developmental process, which depends upon continuous support. It is designed and intended to entrench strengths, develop potential and overcome weaknesses (p60). Likewise, the WSE policy claims that as a process it is meant to be supportive and developmental rather than punitive and judgemental. It will not be used as a coercive measure, but will ensure that policies are complied with. It will also facilitate support and improvement of school performance using approaches of partnerships, collaboration, mentoring and guidance (p8).

In my final analysis it is apparent that the policy documents assume that the climate existing within the schools is receptive to these innovations; that the mere stating of goals, for example, that all schools will receive these documents and thereby implement them as suggested by the policies and that the state of resources, both physical and human, at schools will support these innovations.

Synthesis

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the foregoing analysis.

Firstly, the process of policy formation was not straightforward and simple when one considers the various power-wielding interest groups that were involved. Policy formulation involved having to confront the crucial issues of how power is utilised and exercised in the making of political choices as who is involved in policymaking, who is consulted and how and whose interests are served. In no society that we know do the voices of all citizens weigh equally in the process, nor do such voices express uniform interests and values (Sutton & Levinson 2002). The process, especially in the case of WSE formulation, was not free of a struggle for voice and exposition of ideological supremacy from the teacher union, SADTU. The WSE policy process involved and continues to involve negotiation, bargaining and mutual adjustment in the multi-vocal arena of policymaking.

Secondly, the WSE policy may be seen as a “settlement”, that is, attempting to suture together and smooth over matters of difference between the participating and competing interests in the process of policy text production. Sometimes the suturing of difference within the policy settlement means that very different things can be done legitimately in the process of policy implementation. Different interests may give very different emphases to various aspects of policy.

Thirdly, gaps in policy implementation plans are sometimes referred to as “refraction” (Freeman 1981). This is evident in all three policies but we must remember that even without any obvious ambiguities in a policy text there will be no single interpretation of a policy document. This means that predicting the effects of policy is never easy.

Fourthly, there were tensions in as far as the overall coherence of the WSE policy framework is concerned. Furthermore, each of the policies was written in isolation, that is, without giving attention to the elements of the others. This is of course not surprising because not all the three policies were generated by the same directorate within the National Ministry. The WSE policy notes that it is meant to compliment other quality assurance initiatives conducted under the aegis of SE, namely, accreditation of providers,

programme and service reviews, and the monitoring of learning achievements. It makes, however, only a fleeting mention of the DAS for educators, which closely intersects with WSE because of classroom observations, but clearly there was no conscious effort to reflect “joined up thinking” between the policies (see Chapter 7, proposition 2).

Fifthly, detailed policy analysis reflects that there are similarities and differences that exist among the three evaluation policies though these are not explicitly stated in the policies, that is, these relationships are not emphasised in the policies. The commonality that emerged is that they are all aimed at improving the quality of schools and the education system as a whole.

Sixthly, each policy framework rests heavily on a number of underlying assumptions about the education system and teaching and learning in general. Some of the underlying assumptions in the WSE policy are that teachers will view the policy in a positive light and will willingly adopt its principles; that the training offered at all levels in the implementation chain will be adequate to ensure efficient implementation; that implementers are aware of their roles and duties and possess a common understanding of the policy expectations; and that all schools have effectively functioning and competent school governing bodies that will play an active role in the implementation process. Some basic assumptions on which DAS is based is that teachers are able to engage in reflective practice and thereafter conduct self-appraisal, that peer appraisal will be done by a colleague who is informed and capable, that the criteria to be used are understood and applied uniformly and that education support services are fully functional to provide assistance.

Section Two

5.2.1 Dissenting voices: presenting the alternative understandings of WSE

Audiotaped interviews were conducted with the WSE policy consultant, national department officials, the North West provincial co-ordinator and external evaluation team members, union officials and district officials to elicit their understanding of WSE; identify further policy goals for WSE; propose reasons for the introduction of WSE; elaborate on

the similarities and differences between WSE and related evaluation policies; and establish the challenges and possibilities facing the implementation of WSE.

The interviews were transcribed and responses to open-ended questions were described in brief narrative form. Data from interviews and free writing schedules were analysed to produce a comprehensive picture of stakeholder understandings of WSE. Similar and divergent responses were categorised in an attempt to identify response patterns in the different groups of stakeholders that were interviewed.

Findings

Understanding of the policy

Understanding of policy varied among officials in the different categories. In general there was a fair amount of repetition among the national officials who evidently displayed a very comprehensive understanding of WSE. A senior national official reflected his informed understanding of WSE by the following comment:

The way I understand WSE policy is that it focuses on an individual school at a time and it tries to evaluate the school as a whole. In this way, it differs from other forms of evaluation that the Department engages in. It doesn't only focus on learning and teaching but also covers critical areas of governance, administration, management, physical provisioning and also provisioning and procurement of learning materials, aspects of human resources and teacher development and so on. The WSE policy uses a few pre-determined indicators to guide the evaluation exercise but I think the main point here is that it tries to do a comprehensive evaluation of the entire school (Petrus 18/04/2002).

Other national officials also saw WSE as a process of identifying shortcomings in order to provide assistance in the problem areas. The idea of WSE being a supportive and developmental process also emerged strongly among the provincial officials as evidenced by the remark of this official:

I understand WSE as a process that will look at the school as a whole with the sole purpose of coming with recommendations that will improve the quality of teaching as a co-function (Lebo 22/05/2002).

The common thread in all the interviews at national level was that this was not to be seen as a process of investigating any one person in the school but about focussing on the school as a whole. The resulting information from conducting the process may be used to influence amendments to policy as well as to target financial assistance to schools where there is a shortage of resources.

To one provincial evaluator, WSE simply meant “quality control” of the child that left the system. The child in this instance was likened to a finished product from an industry, which is put out with a quality-controlled stamp of approval.

All the union officials reflected that the purpose of WSE is to evaluate schools through the use of specially designed measuring instruments and identified criteria that have been negotiated. According to them the central idea is to first understand where the inequalities exist in order to develop a strategy to address them.

District officials³⁵ provided a somewhat different response as compared to the other stakeholders. WSE was viewed by one district official as an evaluation of the relationships that existed in the institution, that is, the relationship between the managers, governing body, pupils and parents. The school cleanliness also forms part of this evaluation (DM³⁶ 03/06/2002). Yet to another district official, WSE meant something completely different. To him WSE was in-service training for teachers (CM³⁷ 24/05/2002). The basic idea was to provide support and improve on the teaching and learning in the school and by so doing improve the teacher’s ability, integrity and professionalism. He also alluded to the fact that the policy made way for the introduction of accountability into the system.

The deputy district manager’s understanding was aligned to that of the circuit manager when he described that WSE would help managers to manage better by making use of specially designed instruments for the evaluation. He elaborated by saying that the kind of education that individuals would gain will help them to take responsible positions in the world of work – not to develop a “lot of white collar personnel” but rather to develop

³⁵ Reference to district officials will include the district manager, deputy district manager, circuit manager and other officials e.g., support services that are based at district level.

³⁶ DM is used throughout to refer to the district manager.

³⁷ CM is used throughout to refer to the circuit manager.

individuals that are skilled in information technology, commerce, medicine, health and the political arena (DDM³⁸ 29/05/2002).

What was the policy responding to?

Seven themes emerged as to why the policy was released: need to establish clearly defined standards; compliance to legislation; to be able to prepare the learners better to compete globally; a tool for change management; to address the poor matriculation results; to address dysfunctional schools; as a result of parental pressure and to redress imbalances.

Post-1994, whilst the new democratic government was busy developing policies, a certain amount of chaos prevailed and non-delivery occurred in the absence of clearly defined standards. According to this official:

WSE is one of the ways that the Department wants to say, "look, it is time for us to begin to indicate to schools what are our bench-marks and standards". (Petrus 18/03/2002).

Regarding this issue of standards, a district official offered greater clarity when he expressed his opinion that the overriding goal for introduction of the policy was to identify the difference in standards of education in the former Departments of Education with the intention of introducing "a tool to improve the quality of teaching" (CM, 24/05/2002).

Surprisingly, only the national officials made reference to legislation, which they identified as the key reason for the release of the WSE policy. Firstly, the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996 was highlighted. One official succinctly outlined the stipulations of this policy:

Actually when you look at NEPA, I think article 3 and 8 of the National Education Policy Act, it mandates the Minister to monitor the performance of the education system and report on the findings. The reporting is mainly for two purposes; first it is to account to the public. Secondly, it is meant to identify those shortcomings within the policy implementation at the level of the national, so that we are able to tighten on those gaps, and at the provincial and school level it is meant to identify shortcomings and gaps in their performances, so that they can be provided with focussed interventions (Tom 07/06/2002).

³⁸ DDM is used throughout to refer to the deputy district manager.

Yet another national official expressed that the WSE policy was also responding to the White Paper of 1995, which emphasises that provision of education should not only be education per se but it must be quality education. Since at the time there was no system that identified the key indicators that defined quality there was a need to introduce WSE, which it is hoped, will identify the key elements within the system that contribute towards the provision of quality education. In response to the issue of quality, the national official expressed that government is obligated to provide quality education so that our learners are better able to compete globally (Tom 07/06/2002).

The poor matriculation results are another reliable indicator that has highlighted anomalies within the education system. This reason was offered in both provincial and union official interviews. The majority of the provincial, union and district officials claimed that the media had reported many schools as being dysfunctional. In light of this dysfunctionality, some sort of intervention was needed to try and “normalise” the prevailing situation in schools. The district manager elaborated on this view by saying that:

The WSE was released by the national ministry to address the question of school effectiveness. Our schools are dysfunctional, some of our schools are dysfunctional and for this reason the WSE is addressing this dysfunctionality and it is also trying to improve the purpose of professionalism and effectiveness that is there in other schools that are doing well (DM 03/06/2002).

Provincial officials also alluded to the fact that the release of WSE could have been the result of external pressure from parents calling for greater internal accountability.

For another national official the WSE policy was introduced as a tool for change management – a means of addressing the imbalances of the past. Similar sentiments were expressed by this provincial official for the release of the policy:

I would say that we are responding to the equal distribution of resources in the country and by going to schools, we want to start in the schools and then we want to redress whatever imbalance there was in the past (John 21/05/2002).

Role in the development and implementation of the policy

National officials

All except one of the national officials had assumed responsibilities in the directorate after the policy had been promulgated; hence they were not directly involved in the development of the policy. The national official who had been involved in the development of the policy provided deep insights into the formulation, development and implementation process (see Section One). Other officials gained knowledge through rigorous training, attending workshops and later presenting workshops to their provincial counterparts.

As regards implementation of the policy, a national official aptly described what he felt was a change in the role of the National Department in the implementation of the policy:

...in the past we believed that our role was to formulate policies at national level, and we expect the provinces to implement these policies, and that has been the weakest flaws within the system. You find that the policies were inaccurately translated; some of them fell off the wayside because people on the ground did not understand them. Until the policy has been properly infused into the system, the role of the Directorate is to give support and assist the provinces in the accurate translation and effective implementation of the policy (Tom 07/06/2002).

Provincial officials

Besides the provincial co-ordinator who expressed his very active role in the development of the policy, other officials claimed that they had *not* been involved in the development process. The provincial co-ordinator explained that his role was not to insist on implementation although they *did* have the power to force the policy on reluctant schools. Instead his approach was to “create a sense of need in the school and in this way the teachers enjoy the experience” (Co-ordinator 14/08/2002).

The evaluators on the other hand, by virtue of their differing roles within the team, expressed what they envisaged to be their functions in implementation. In general, the *evaluators* saw their role as being mainly one of ensuring that they make policy a reality by functioning within the ambit of policy stipulations. Only one of the evaluators saw his role as all-encompassing, which included being part of the school development planning (this is

not identified as an expectation of evaluators in the policy). This evaluator believed that it was incumbent upon him “...to make sure that teachers understand the importance of the policy and to present it in a way that it doesn’t bring fear or misunderstanding” (Lebo, 22/05/2002). The response of one of the evaluators was somewhat different from others when he claimed that *Wagpos* was an advantaged school and his role was “to come and observe and learn and see what good practices are happening here. But my role here is to come here and to evaluate, identify good practices, if there are any, then be able to carry it to other schools” (Lebo 22/05/2002).

The *team leader* identified that first and foremost, it was her responsibility to brief the staff and the school governing body chairperson about what the team was to do as she was convinced that principals sometimes use WSE as a “sword”.

I saw my work as telling the people precisely what we are going to do. I told them “People we are coming into your classrooms, we are going to look at documentation, the ordinary things that you do”... So please don’t impress us, don’t be nervous. It was just before the April holidays and I said, “Please promise me that you are not going to use your holiday to try and redo everything – give us what you have” (Team leader 23/05/2002).

She clearly understood her commitments to her team: responsibility with regard to the compilation of the report and the delivery of the oral and written report to the school. She also expressed concerns over whether the different sectors would step in to play their role after she had officially handed over the report to the school, yet remained amazingly positive stating that there was an individual within the provincial unit who was responsible for monitoring and support. She lamented the fact that due to the nature of the evaluation teams’ work they had to always be engaged in evaluating new schools and there was no opportunity for them to revisit schools to consolidate and note progress.

The *monitor* described her role as being twofold, that is, to check that the school had been well treated by the evaluators and that the team conformed to the policy. In addition it was the monitor’s responsibility to guide the team leader as well as to complete a report after the evaluation – the basis of which would be to note if the team’s report was consistent with all the available documentation.

Union officials

All three officials acknowledged that they had been involved in the policy development process and had, through their unions, submitted contributions to the many drafts of the policy. The SADTU official eloquently expressed that they had not been consulted when the National Department was making certain key decisions concerning implementation. She expressed the concern that the national ministry had turned a blind eye to the DAS policy despite the many similarities between the two policies. This, according to her, was the main reason for the union's reluctance to implement the WSE policy in the determined timeframes.

The union officials identified their role in policy implementation as being one of ensuring that the correct information is filtered down to their membership. They shared a common belief that since teachers are on the receiving end of policy, their attitudes and understanding of the policy are crucial for success.

District officials

All the district officials claimed that they did not have a direct role to play in the development of the policy. The senior district officials stated that from the inception of the policy they were requested to provide inputs on the product that the national ministry had developed.

As regards the implementation of the policy, the district manager rightly pointed out that his role is to organise the support team, which is made up of district functionaries like the subject advisors, auxiliary services, stores and the school governance unit. He was also under the impression that it was the role of district support teams to assess the performance of schools and if they were satisfied with the performance of a school, then there would not be a need for the WSE team to visit that school. His understanding is in contradiction with the policy, which states that it would be the responsibility of the National Ministry to identify schools for evaluation and that district support teams would not be involved in this function. He also remarked that if district support teams were unable to handle the problems at a school the WSE team would be summoned to assist. Again, this is not a function that has to be performed by the evaluation team but rather a function of the support

services at district level. The district manager emphasised that the school would communicate its strengths and weaknesses and its need for assistance directly to the circuit manager who would then communicate this to the District Support Team. This understanding is, however, aligned to the policy expectations.

The deputy manager's view of the role he had to play in implementing the policy was much broader. His role extended beyond facilitating the visits to include motivating the role-players and making the necessary physical resources available. He also felt that it would be his responsibility to study the reports, conduct an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) and pursue the necessary follow up. District officials expressed that it was their role to support schools that required assistance.

The circuit manager, on the other hand, saw his role to be an agent for changing any misconceptions or negative attitudes towards WSE. He hoped to achieve this by “co-ordination and persistence”, for example, if there was a curriculum need he would foster the assistance of the subject advisors but if managerial skills were concerned he would do this on a consultation basis. He also saw it to be his role to inform subject advisors to workshop teachers on OBE.

Goals of the policy

A wide array of ideas emerged as regards the goals of the policy – providing support for the claim that the understanding of the officials varied with regard to the goals of the policy.

One senior national official highlighted that the goal of WSE is to monitor and evaluate the nine key areas as identified in the policy but cautioned that one should not lose sight of the fact that:

Fifty percent of WSE interaction has to concentrate on classroom observation, because that is where the “tyre meets the tarmac”. That’s where we have to make sure that teaching and learning takes place and I think that the goal of the policy is to ensure that within those classrooms there is proper teaching and learning taking place and also to identify whatever difficulties educators encounter, learners encounter, parents encounter and be in a position to address those issues (Buyi 08/08/2002).

Other national officials were aligned to this thinking, claiming that the policy has the potential to contribute to the development of teachers due to the internal and external evaluation components which afford teachers the opportunity of gaining a “second opinion” on their performance. The aim is also to enhance teacher capacity in specific subject fields so that results would be improved and teacher morale would be uplifted (DM 03/06/2002).

Another goal is to improve the quality of education for children – as the success of the policy is not about the process but about the outcomes (PM 11/01/2002). A variety of conceptions in the arena of quality and improvement emerged. One district official identified the overall goal of the policy as school improvement (CM 24/05/2002), whilst for another the overriding goal of WSE is to ensure that quality education is in place so that the masses are empowered with the necessary skills to make them globally competitive (DDM 29/05/2002). Yet another district official felt that the goal of the policy is to make schools “centres of excellence” not only in academic spheres but also in areas of sport (DM 03/06/2002). He continued that the idea is “to make schools attractive and community friendly so that the community would be proud of the school” (DM 03/06/2002).

A somewhat intriguing and insightful response relating to the idea of achieving quality was afforded by a national official:

...quality is not a fixed target. Quality shifts and evolves with time, so you find that from time to time you need to reflect on what you are doing in order to be responsive to the social, economic and political needs so that the dimensions for WSE – the principles underlying WSE – is to strive for better from time to time (Tom 07/06/2002).

There was general consensus at national level that the policy is aimed at data collection for the chief purpose of reporting on the performance of the education system as a whole. Other goals identified were a call for greater accountability to be introduced in the system and to ensure that the evaluation was conducted in a fair and objective manner.

Only the policymaker (consultant) identified the goal as being developmental, that is, to ensure that there is a link between evaluation and development, which must be facilitated by the district support team. In general, the union officials were brief and stated that the goal of the policy is to create a benchmark and evaluate schools using specific criteria and well-designed instruments.

The key ideas crystallised from the provincial evaluator interviews, not already captured in the discussion above, reflect that the main objectives of WSE is to:

- improve service delivery at our schools by identifying gaps and recommending specific support services which in some provinces are not as yet available;
- to revise policies that are obsolete and to formulate new policies if need be;
- to ensure that all nine focus areas are functional in the school;
- to create a culture of responsibility within the school, that is, through schools conducting their own self-evaluation; and
- to create a culture of responding to parents and learners, who are both expected to play a prominent role in the evaluation.

Similarities and differences between the policies

National officials

Generally, the national officials provided, with relative ease, a deep, insightful and impressive picture of the key focus areas of each of the policies. Responses as far as the degree of convergence between these policies is concerned were aptly described. National officials differentiated between the implementation timeframes, types of instruments, monitoring and reporting procedures and the basic theory of action for each initiative. In the main, responses were detailed.

Provincial officials

At provincial level, the data indicates that officials were not as impressive in detail as national officials; though in most instances officials did confidently state what the focus area of each policy was.

For one official, the similarity in all three policies was that areas of strength and development could be identified (Mokgadi 23/05/2002). For another evaluator, DAS and WSE were seen as being complimentary, that is, if teachers were developed through DAS then the whole school quality would also improve; although he persisted in describing the policies as “quite separate entities” (Lebo 22/05/2002).

Another official, however, displayed a superficial understanding of DAS and WSE indicating that they served to compliment each other but appeared completely confused when requested to explain how this was meant to happen. For him the major differences pertained to the target group.

Only one official appeared to display a firm understanding of the interconnectedness as she saw DAS as a process that would be ongoing and that would contribute to improving the teacher significantly, whilst WSE would occur once in a three-year cycle to do quality assurance (Team leader 23/05/2002). In pointing out the focus of SE and WSE, she noted that both converge because “a good functioning school will contribute to a healthy education system”.

Provincial officials viewed DAS as being firmly located within the human resources framework and WSE within an accountability framework. SE was viewed as being political because the data was to be used within the political arena – the Minister would have to account on the progress of the education system.

Union officials

Overall, two of the three officials displayed a “good” understanding of the relationship between all three policies. They expressed that a relationship exists since they are all about quality management and improvement – correctly pointing out that WSE is more closely linked to DAS with the commonality being the classroom visits. They were all clear that the policies were different with regard to focus, instruments, what they measure and how they are to be implemented.

Policymaker

The policymaker had not done any cross-referencing with the other policies but had a diluted understanding of DAS, claiming that it was similar to WSE in that both supported the idea of professional development. His understanding of SE was very rudimentary.

District officials

Overall the district officials experienced the most difficulty in answering the question and resorted to irrelevant or inadequate responses or simply reiterated ideas they presented in the previous questions. Surprisingly, only one district official had an idea of what the key focus areas of all three policies were. According to him there was a close link between the goals of WSE and SE. If WSE had the impact of raising the standard of performance in a school; then this would result in raising the sum total of performance in the schools in the district and ultimately result in raising the standard of the entire school system (DM 03/06/2002).

Furthermore, he explained that DAS is focussed on increasing the capacity of educators and WSE is intended to improve the academic development of the institution. According to the district manager there is a close relationship between teacher capacity and academic achievement. In essence DAS forms a pillar of the WSE exercise.

In comparison, other district officials had no understanding of SE and had a very poor understanding of DAS. As a result they experienced grave difficulties in stating the similarities and differences between these policies.

Hurdles to overcome

The constraints facing policy implementation were varied and numerous. Some of the constraints may be regarded as generic whilst others were unique to the experiences of specific groups of stakeholders. Common patterns and themes ferreted from the interview data and free writing schedules are presented below.

Teacher fears

All five categories of respondents identified teacher fears as one of the major constraints facing implementation. The general belief is that teacher fears have been generated largely as a result of the historical perceptions of inspections. A national official used his own experiences to explain:

You were kind of nervous when they came because you knew after the visit that they were going to sit with the principal and discuss your shortcomings, thereafter the subsequent report wouldn't always reflect well on you. That's one fear that teachers have – that this may become an inspection (Petrus 18/03/2002).

Apart from the inherent negative experiences of teachers with inspections – new teachers are often inducted into the profession by seasoned teachers, school management teams (SMTs) or principals who seldom spare them of any of the stressful and sometimes frightening stories about inspections. The data indicates that a stumbling block to implementation is how and by whom information is conveyed to the already sceptical teachers. Supervisors and national officials were convinced that in most instances information about WSE is conveyed in a negative light by SMTs and principals. These claims are substantiated in this particular supervisor's remarks:

The principals they convey this thing (WSE) in a negative way to suit themselves. They are using the teachers to stop this (WSE) because their work is not up to standard (Derrick 21/05/2002).

The media has portrayed WSE as the “inspections” of the past and this has not helped to allay teachers' fears. One senior national official expressed his frustrations with regard to the stance taken by the DoE on the issue

You know, other institutions challenge these issues in the press and they defend their integrity but the department does not do that (Buyi 08/08/2002).

A national official expressed that more would have to be done in the area of advocacy and he is convinced that it is the responsibility of the department to give “proper and well informed guidance to our teachers and schools, parents and everyone else” (Petrus 18/03/2002).

A provincial official ascribed teacher fears to a somewhat different reason:

I think there is still this fear. They are not sure of what they are doing, especially black teachers. They have this thing that we have received inferior education. Not confident of what we deliver in class so we are bound to have reservations with regard to a stranger coming to class (Mokgadi 23/05/2002).

She continued that a self-confessed reason of teachers, for being reluctant to be evaluated, is that they are ill equipped to teach within the OBE paradigm.

Generally, officials' experiences are that teachers view the process as being punitive and have the perception that the evaluation is seen as a ploy to root out incompetent teachers or to identify poor performers by name in a national report.

The approach adopted by at least one province has also contributed to creating fear in teachers, for example, it has set up an office of standards³⁹ based on the similar model of the OFSTED (Inspection System) in Britain. It is hardly surprising that teachers have negative perceptions about the role of this unit.

Lack of understanding

The policies are seen separately from one another as they have been developed by different directorates, that is, DAS by the Directorate: Teacher Development and both WSE and SE by the Directorate: Quality Assurance. There is no coherent understanding of the policies not only among teachers but also among the evaluators (NAPTOSA official 29/03/2002). In response to her comment the official suggested:

...that there has to be some coherent management across all the evaluation policies that will aim to bring them together so as to obtain a holistic picture. Therefore we propose that there be one policy, that is, quality management policy that begins from the teacher in the context of the school and context of the district (NAPTOSA official 29/03/2002).

Put very directly, the circuit manager also expressed that teachers did not understand the policies:

Our teachers find it very difficult to buy the idea that there are three instruments on the table. Many ask why three instruments, what is the difference? And the difference and the aims are not clear to them (CM 24/05/2002).

Policy overload

National officials unanimously agreed that districts are being overloaded. At provincial level the divergences in opinion are even more dramatic over the issue of whether implementing all three evaluation policies would overload the teachers. One provincial official did not feel that implementing all three policies would overload teachers especially if these policies are properly managed and embraced by teachers who, she cautioned, needed to be trained (Mokgadi 23/05/2002). Her impressions were in direct contradiction with another supervisor's impressions of the ability of teachers to cope with the implementation of all three policies:

That's a big problem. There is confusion. DAS itself takes a lot of time and then even when we say they can run parallel, it's going to be a lot of paperwork. I don't know how they are going to cope. There has always been a complaint of exactly what is expected to be done (Lebo 22/05/2002).

Yet another supervisor painted a very grim picture when he expressed that:

...educators on the ground seem to have lost hope in the Department of Education. Many policies are coming and being implemented but at the end of it all they (the policies) die a sudden death (John 22/05/2002).

He went on to add that teachers have become despondent because:

...the Department has failed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of DAS – that is what is making this new policy WSE to be rejected at school level (John 22/05/2002).

Another provincial official expressed similar sentiments when she remarked that:

I think that the National department should sit down and do some introspection. I wonder how many policies came and disappeared since 1996. I mean with all these launches, it's like a launch into thin air and then it's gone (Team leader 23/05/2002).

³⁹ This unit has been installed in Gauteng province, one of the nine provinces in the country.

A union official described that the present fragmented approach of implementing the individual policies is unmanageable, as schools do not have the human resources to do it properly.

The school that tries to employ all three (evaluation policies) is going to work themselves to death trying to do them by deadlines and then they (the school staff) will question the spirit in which they are being used and this is usually under stress. So I don't think they can be implemented. Today we're being developmentally appraised and when you've barely recovered from this ...we now have WSE and while you still reeling under this shock you get some kind of systemic evaluation where you have to fill in questionnaires...This is all time-consuming (NAPTOSA official 29/03/2002).

A national official bluntly enunciated that:

The implementation of the WSE policy will be all right, but it is only the aftercare – there will be no after care, because the District Support Team does not exist in some areas (Mtembu 08/08/2002).

Teachers were “suffocating” with all these engagements (DDM 29/05/2002). His solution was that there should not be anything new introduced in the school in the next six months but rather schools should be allowed the opportunity to re-enforce other policies that have been in place. As with WSE, this should be “woven into experiences” at the school (DDM 29/05/2002).

When asked as to whether teachers were coping with the three policies this district official remarked that:

...these three systems should be combined and yes one can have your overall focus like WSE, but I would say that the evaluation of a teacher individually should form part of WSE and with that we would need to get all the subject advisors involved. Why can the teachers within their subjects not be evaluated at the very same time and make this report a comprehensive report (CM 24/05/2002).

From his first-hand experience of interacting with schools in the district he stated that:

With the DAS I can tell you it causes more disruption in the schools than making a contribution because of the fact that to evaluate one teacher so many other teachers are involved that the school is disrupted (CM 24/05/2002).

Occasionally more than one school is disrupted because members of the appraisal panel may be chosen from other schools as well. Practically this means that if the staff of a school numbers 50, then it means that 50 school days on the calendar will be disrupted just for DAS without consideration for other compulsory school activities. In fact some district officials were of the opinion that if WSE was being implemented in a school then DAS should be suspended for that year in the school.

Political forces

At least one of the provinces, which has not as yet established a supervisory unit, has claimed that lack of finances is not the problem but that the problem is more deep-seated (political). A senior national official explains the special case:

I don't know but it looks to me, it sounds like politics... They are using their own continuous evaluation themes and all those things. They do it their own way and they feel their children pass better than all other children in the country because of the way in which they work. National is coming in behind them (Phalani 06/09/2002).

The lack of proper communication between the unions and the department (also cited as a political issue) is seen as a barrier to implementation. For this official, the resistance from the unions was linked mainly to the fact that:

...any change of any kind is intimidating to people because change brings the unknown and especially in a situation where some people have developed some comfort zones for themselves – such an innovation is threatening their comfort zones (Tom 07/06/2002).

A frustrated senior national official described the stance taken by SADTU in delaying implementation as a deliberate, carefully orchestrated, political stance. According to him SADTU expressed that:

They will come back to us after the conference. It was used to get other people elections, most probably. That is our thinking, we do not know. You will recall that this started around May, they have been dragging it but in the last meeting in August, they came out very clear to say to wait for the Congress. After the Congress⁴⁰ we shall talk better language (Phalani 06/09/2002).

⁴⁰ SADTU National Congress was held during September 2002. Elections were held for a new executive council.

Similar sentiments were expressed by a provincial official who was convinced that the union's stance was related to securing votes in the upcoming elections (Mokgadi 23/05/2002). Her concern was that the relationship between the union and National department was "unhealthy" and that something had to be done about it. Another reason afforded for the delaying tactics used by SADTU was that they were unhappy that government had not implemented DAS with the same vigour as the WSE (Mokgadi 23/05/2002). This is in stark contrast to another provincial official's view that the unions had a legitimate case because the department had not done enough to involve managers and district managers (Lebo 22/05/2002).

Prolonged delay by some provinces to implement has also been the source of dissatisfaction among teachers. The common view expressed is "*are we not the teachers in the same department getting the same pay, same employment conditions?*" (Phalani 06/09/2002).

Teachers in the province were well prepared but rejected the supervisors on their arrival because "union officials from Pretoria came into the school on the morning of the evaluation to incite the teachers" (Lebo 22/05/2002).

Lack of human and physical resources

Human resources

Lack of skilled supervisors in the gateway subjects⁴¹ has contributed to a delay in implementation. A national official expounds on the problem:

It is easy to get people with management experience but with classroom observation experience it's difficult because most of our principals have never been instructional leaders in their school s... I think that is the type of training that these supervisors need to have (Buyi 08/08/2002).

In at least two provinces, individuals who have been trained as subject advisors (post level 3) are also engaged with supervisory work (post level 4). Since their salaries are not commensurate with their work many have become demotivated and frustrated. In a desperate attempt to capacitate the supervisory unit of one of the provinces, temporary teachers were being utilised. The National Department did not consider this to be a

⁴¹ The gateway subjects referred to are mathematics and the science-related subjects.

worthwhile solution and hence did not train such individuals (Phalani 06/09/2002). At least two provinces are working on “ghost squads”, that is, people that they bring in from other directorates to assist on an ad-hoc basis but do not have an established supervisory system (Buyi 08/08/2002).

There are serious deeply rooted problems linked to the issue of location of infrastructure and the resourcing of such structures. Firstly, there have been concerns about the location of the WSE unit in provinces. Policy stipulations require that these units be located at provincial head offices but the problem arises because many individuals who are interested in these posts are currently living far away from head offices and are deterred from applying as this will involve relocation. Furthermore, operating as an evaluator from head office and visiting schools in deep rural areas means having to overnight in remote areas. This has been a further deterrent. Yet another issue pertains to a misconception amongst provincial colleagues as to what the exact role of the WSE unit is. The common belief that prevails is that since the advisory services exist there is no need to create another unit to do the same work (Petrus 18/03/2002).

Supervisors in the North West suggested that there was sufficient personpower to take the process “off the ground” in the short term but long-term plans needed to concentrate on training more supervisors.

The major challenge facing implementation is capacity, that is, in terms of numbers and skills (PM 11/01/2002). WSE is based on a firm evidence base hence evaluators are expected to produce concise reports that can be appropriately validated by the data they have collected. This calls for evaluators to possess good writing skills as these reports acquire the status of legal documents. The problem being faced is that most evaluators are English second and third language speakers. Writing and communication skills thus need to be developed.

Some supervisors did not have sufficient experience and monitors seriously lack leadership skills (Team leader 23/05/2002). Evaluators identified that the areas that they needed training in were in report writing, financial management and communication skills. There were strong concerns raised at district level that there were insufficient human resources to carry out all the tasks required of the district.

Physical resources

Only national, provincial and district officials identified this as a constraint. In some instances resources are available but they are underutilised mainly because leaders lacked the capacity and vision to use their resources for a meaningful gain for the school.

There was a lack of equipment such as computers, fax machines, printers and photocopiers at district level – all of which are required for the preparation of documentation for the evaluation. Furthermore, the evaluators had not received their cars and this created serious problems with regard to transport to the schools. District officials also faced similar difficulties. The seriousness of this matter is reflected by the district manager's remarks:

...we are basically operating with one vehicle out of thirteen vehicles and all of them are in for repair with transport and they would be there for a long period, up to four months waiting for repairs (DM 03/06/2002).

Funds

Surprisingly, only national and provincial officials identified financial constraints as a barrier to implementation. Some provinces don't have sufficient funds to establish the necessary infrastructure and to employ the necessary human resources to instigate this (Petrus 18/03/2002). Also, in some instances, far too much has been budgeted for training of supervisors in comparison to budgets for training of principals to conduct self-evaluation (PM 11/01/2002).

Inappropriate accounting mechanisms

Whilst some provinces face the dilemma of inadequate funds to implement policy some of the provinces had difficulty with utilising their budgets – they returned large proportions of their budget unspent to National Treasury (Buyi 08/08/2002). This can be attributed to a lack of understanding, poor (or non-existent) financial management mechanisms coupled with the bureaucratic red tape to access the necessary funds.

Accreditation

Achieving accreditation for supervisors has also been a long painful process for the national department. The absence of accreditation of evaluators raises questions in the minds of teachers as to whether the supervisors are qualified to provide advice. Supervisors are frustrated because they have gone through all the necessary training but have no certification to prove this (Derrick 21/05/2002).

Communication channels

There have been complaints of individuals working in isolation as well as of the existence of serious flaws in the communication channels as is candidly stated by this official:

...my problem has always been that you never see to the finish of these things, as if Department Directorates are now working in silos. One is not aware of the other; the bottom line is that the same people on the ground are the people who must carry these policies forward (DDM 29/05/2002).

Too many forms!

At provincial level there were opposing views and mixed reactions to whether the documentation for WSE was too much to complete. Whilst one provincial official did not feel that the documentation they had to complete was too much, another vehemently disagreed saying that:

There is a lot of duplication of what we are doing. We even recommended at one stage that these instruments need to be looked into (Derrick 21/05/2002).

One size fits all

The use of a single set of criteria for all schools was seen by some officials as a major threat to successful implementation. A district official expressed his view in this regard:

I see this (use of a single set of criteria for all schools) as a major threat to WSE because a school will just come up and say, "but how can you apply the same criteria to our school, look what is going on here, we don't have enough classrooms, two teachers in one classroom, one teacher teaching three grades in one classroom. We don't have resources, we don't have toilets, we don't have electricity (CM 24/05/2002).

When I posed the question to provincial officials they responded that this was not a serious issue as they had been adequately trained to utilise the criteria selectively in the given context. Circumstances were key indicators in informing them as to whether to go “broader” (use the full scale of criteria) or not.

Allotted duration for evaluation

Surprisingly, only one evaluator was of the opinion that the three days allocated for the evaluation may not be sufficient for deeply rural schools that lacked the infrastructure and organisation that other schools had.

Department officials' attitudes

Some provincial department officials did not want to be associated with the policy as they also viewed this as inspections.

Training

At provincial and district level, lack of training was identified as a barrier to implementation. District officials are not adequately trained to go to schools to assume the role of a spokesperson (Derrick 21/05/2002).

A concern raised by the district manager is that although functionaries were being trained, the approach that was being used was not beneficial. He remarked that:

...we are being trained in piece meals, that is, the subject advisor will be taken alone to be trained, and then the auxiliary services will be taken alone to be trained and when they meet we have got different views about our training, and when implementing this is why we differ in implementing (DM 03/06/2002).

Training of principals to oversee the self-evaluation in their schools has been poorly done and has also not been sustained. Senior management teams have also not been taken on board with the training (DM 03/06/2002).

Evaluator anxiety

Anxiety among supervisors to get the process right also exists (PM 11/01/2002). The challenge for them is to operate in a transparent and professional manner, remaining sensitive to people and reporting fairly and sensibly.

Delay in monitoring and feedback

Another major drawback identified by most of the district officials is that the Department did not engage in timeous monitoring and evaluation of policies. Long periods of time often elapse before mechanisms are put in place to establish whether systems are operating according to predetermined standards.

National Department's approach

The department has been strongly criticised that it is “not firm enough on the policies that they had established” (DM 03/06/2002). The signal that is being sent out is that any group of people can derail it (the policy), like SADTU in this instance (DM 03/06/2002). The approach adopted by the department has been viewed by some as a somewhat lax and lenient approach.

Building roads for success

Notwithstanding the constraints, there are many factors, especially the proactive approach adopted by some stakeholders, which have influenced implementation positively. The persistent foci identified from the interviews and free writing schedules are discussed briefly below.

Firstly, most of the provinces have supervisory units in place due to funding that has been accessed by the provinces through conditional grants.

Secondly, national officials viewed the engagement with unions as a positive step forward. This is evidenced by the remark made by one official:

While we have this debate going on I think it is a positive thing because it is giving us an opportunity to look into the policy and see what mistakes we have made, what strategies can we put in place, so that we ensure that the policy is properly implemented (Buyi 08/08/2002).

Emerging from these discussions was a draft protocol for classroom observation developed by “fusion” of the DAS instrument and the WSE instrument. The district also has a good working relationship with the unions. They invite the unions to regular meetings and allow them to provide inputs. “As a district you empower yourself by using this approach” (DDM 29/05/2002). The circuit has a close working relationship with the district and this enhances the opportunity to take the process forward (CM 24/05/2002).

Thirdly, training and advocacy on the “new fused approach” was being planned for all supervisory personnel as explained by this national official:

We are adopting a new advocacy framework for WSE. It says that as from September, National office will be meeting at all supervisory levels in the provinces to brief them on the protocol and provide some form of training on the latest developments and also make use of DAS. The WSE policy and the DAS policy are two different policies, and also the fusion together of the instrument does not in any way change any of the two policies. The two policies are still run parallel at school level, but they only meet at the level of the classroom observation, that’s when they converge (Buyi 08/08/2002).

Extensive training, both in-house and external, was received by the supervisors and monitors which has contributed significantly towards demystifying various aspects of WSE and paving the way for a holistic picture of WSE. Supervisors and monitors gained an invaluable amount of experience during the pilot runs in the province and through conducting training for principals and SMTs. Evaluators reported that feedback from pilot schools and training workshops was positive, that is, the exercise was regarded as being fruitful and beneficial. Circuit managers have received a three-day training session on theory of WSE (CM 24/05/2002).

In an attempt to further improve implementation of WSE, the National Department has appointed one person to assist with advocacy of all initiatives in the Chief Directorate: Quality Assurance. Other avenues such as television, radio and newspapers were also being explored in the approach to popularise the initiatives. At provincial level many of the

evaluators had presented advocacy courses. Creative and innovative ideas on other means of advocacy besides workshops were being explored at the provincial level as well.

Fourthly, an electronic database is being established at the National Department, which will assist in collating information from both SE and WSE thus facilitating the preparation of a national report card. A proper filing system has been established at provincial level in advance for the plethora of data that is anticipated.

Fifthly, the National Department has established a subdirectorates referred to as Quality Management Systems, the chief function of which is to study the recommendations made as a result of WSE and SE, and to ensure that interventions are instituted promptly. The provincial unit also has a dedicated person to follow up on recommendations made.

Sixthly, there was consensus among national and provincial officials that schools across the provinces are inviting supervisors to evaluate them despite the fact that they have not been selected for evaluation by National.

Seventhly, the province had embarked on a rigorous recruitment and selection campaign for technically skilled data capturers for the next wave of evaluations. A concerted effort has been made to boost the morale among evaluators by providing them with necessary physical resources, for example, housing them in comfortable offices, which are fitted with telephones and state-of-the-art computers.

Eighthly, a positive attitude prevails among a few district officials – these willing individuals may advocate for the process (DM 03/06/2002). The North West provincial unit enjoys the support of all senior officials in the province (Derrick 21/05/2002).

Synthesis

The foregoing analysis and extensive presentation of empirical data confirms that there was a difference in understanding of the WSE policy among officials in the same category and across the different categories of officials. The various interpretations of policy text are evident when one considers the explanations offered for the different questions posed.

An interesting and multiple array of ideas emerged for why the policy was released. Dysfunctional schools, poor matric results and parental pressure emerged as the common reasons even though these are not cited in the WSE policy. A simple explanation for this is that the media and teacher unions have had a significant influence in creating this impression (see Chapter 6). Legislative compliance was a reason identified only by the national officials and this is not surprising given the fact that national officials who are initiators of policy within the bureaucracy develop new policies within existing legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Why did the officials display such vast differences in their understanding of the evaluation policies? One explanation could relate to the level of officials' involvement in the policy formulation process. It appears that those individuals that were closer to the epicentre of policy development displayed a more insightful understanding of the policy. It is possible that these officials had the opportunity to actively engage in discussions and debates during the policy formulation process. Many of these officials may have also attended the regular NQACC meetings where quality assurance issues were discussed, hence they had a holistic and well-grounded understanding of the evaluation policies. District officials were furthest from the policymaking process – there were glaring ambiguities and gaps in their understanding of the policies. Evidence indicates that district officials were only requested to provide comment on the draft policy documents thus indicating that they did not have as much opportunity as national and provincial officials for interaction during the formulation stage.

Officials' understanding of their exact roles in policy implementation also varied extensively. The provincial officials distinguished themselves from the rest by displaying a very concise understanding of their individual roles in policy implementation. This may be due to the fact that provincial officials received intensive and prolonged training offered directly by the United Kingdom based WSE consultant. Their training was highly specialised and focussed on the general WSE policy, the accompanying guideline documents, procedures for conducting external evaluations, report writing and ethical considerations when conducting evaluations. Yet others, for example, the district officials, displayed a somewhat vague and even incorrect understanding of the roles that they were expected to play in the policy implementation process. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that

these vague and incorrect understandings of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders will impact negatively on the policy implementation process (see Chapter 7, proposition 3).

An exhaustive list of WSE policy goals emerged from all the interviews. In general many “overlapping” goals were identified by the various categories of individuals – again with some groups of individuals displaying a more concrete idea of the goals contained in the WSE policy. Those individuals who stated the goals concisely could have personally identified with the goals and internalised them. Most of the goals listed corresponded with goals identified in the policy analysis. There were however, several “extensive elaborations” of the goals contained in the policy document. This was evident in instances where individuals were better able to articulate themselves.

There were marked differences in the levels of understanding displayed by the various groups with regard to identifying the similarities and differences between policies. The national officials were by far the most coherent in their responses on this question. Difficulties were generally experienced among the other groups of officials, with district officials experiencing most difficulty in responding to this question. This may also be explained in terms of closeness to the “site” of policy development. Cascading training to officials at the various levels of the policy implementation chain often results in those officials at the end of the chain being exposed to a “watered down” version of the original training that was offered (see Chapter 7, proposition 3).

But what do these varied understandings mean for policy implementation? At this stage there are two points that I would like to raise. First, there is a serious concern with regards to the provision of training for WSE. National and provincial officials are often delegated to provide training for district and school staff and there is the risk that these varied understandings, which in some cases are vague and incomplete, will be “passed” over to other officials in the system. The second point is that the WSE policy aptly describes the roles and responsibilities of various levels in the system. Officials operating at these levels are expected to fulfil the roles outlined. Again this means that if officials possess different understandings they will enact policy according to their understandings. Thus deviations from policy stipulations are expected to occur.

The constraints facing policy implementation were varied and numerous. Some constraints were generic whilst others were specific to particular groups of officials. Unsurprisingly, all categories of individuals identified teacher fears as one of the main constraints. Teacher fears have been generated as a result of a number of reasons, some of which are historical perceptions of inspections; the media that has conveyed WSE in a negative light; principals and SMTs conveying the message in a negative way; and teachers being inappropriately trained to teach OBE, to name but a few (see Chapter 7, propositions 4, 5 and 7). It is possible that sustained and prolonged training as well as rigorous advocacy will go a long way in addressing some of the challenges being experienced.

The data reflects that districts are being overloaded by having to co-ordinate too many initiatives. But districts are expected to play a major role in the implementation of the WSE policy. Thus many more questions emerge about whether the Brits district, in this case, has the necessary capacity to support implementation.

WSE is expected to be conducted periodically at schools and this means that sufficient funds need to be committed to this initiative. Officials need to be proactively engaged in leveraging funds to continue the process. But this is not all, as there is also a dire need for proper accounting mechanisms to be instituted so that funds may be readily accessed for implementation.

A matter of concern is that supervisors have not as yet been accredited even though they have undergone training. This issue has to be dealt with as a matter of urgency as teachers will remain sceptical about whether the external evaluation conducted by supervisors is authentic and worse still whether the advice given to them should be followed. If such doubts persist in the minds of teachers then questions may be raised as to whether the time, money and effort spent on WSE was worthwhile.

Several factors that contributed towards positive implementation were also identified. The existence of supervisory units in most provinces; positive engagement with unions to resolve tensions; training and advocacy and the establishment of database systems were but a few initiatives enhancing policy implementation (see Chapter 7, proposition 7).

Section Three

5.3.1 “Voices from the inside: reflections from the outside”

This final section captures insights from interviews with the principal, teachers and school management team at *Wagpos*. These findings resonate to a greater extent with findings from the questionnaire (Appendix O) that was administered to practitioners at the school and the free writing schedules (Appendix J) that were completed by certain teachers.

This discussion falls into two parts. First it reviews insights into practitioner understandings of WSE as obtained from the questionnaire. For the purposes of my study, I present the statistics on the complete data set for all the questions posed. The six-page questionnaire targeted the principal, school management team and staff at *Wagpos*. I was intimately involved in the analysis of the data using SPSS. I have described aspects of the data analysis in Chapter Three.

The next section sequentially contributes insights on WSE goals, reasons for the introduction of WSE, practitioner roles and challenges in policy implementation, and similarities and differences between WSE and other related evaluation policies. Finally the possibilities for implementation at *Wagpos* are elaborated. Data for this section was gleaned from individual and focus group interviews that were conducted with practitioners at *Wagpos* High. Focused groups comprised an average of three and a maximum of five individuals. Individual interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour and focus group interviews were of longer duration, that is, one-and-a-half to two hours. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The individuals involved in focussed group interviews were also requested to complete the free writing schedules to allow them to express themselves – since individuals are sometimes restricted from expressing themselves in a group (used as a corroboratory mode). Emerging themes and patterns were identified.

Findings

Data in Table 5.1 represents the findings on how the respondents became aware of the WSE policy document.

	YES	NO
1. Are you aware of the WSE policy document?	78% (22) ⁴²	22% (5)
2. Was the document made available to all teachers in your school?	74,1% (20)	25,9% (7)
3. Do you have a personal copy of the WSE policy document?	18,5% (5)	81,5% (22)

Table 5.1: How teachers became aware of the WSE policy document

Seventy eight percent of the respondents were aware of the WSE policy document but only 18,5 percent have a personal copy of this document. This certainly does limit the extent to which policy intentions could be realised if so few of the respondents have a copy of the document.

Most of the respondents (50%) indicated that the document was made available through a circular. This implies that the document has been left open to a variety of interpretations and distortions when disseminated largely in the form of circulars. Also, communication of policy goals through workshops, conferences and meetings where there would be a higher degree of interaction, debate and clarification of intentions by teachers carry relatively small percentages (25%, 10% and 5% respectively). The remaining 10 percent of the respondents indicated that they became aware of the policy through a file in the office.

Information in Table 5.2 below indicates, by and large, that most respondents that are aware of the WSE policy document find it easy to understand and believe it allows for flexible implementation with an approximately equal percentage tied over whether it provides clear guidelines for implementation. This could indicate that whereas some respondents have developed ways of managing the process of WSE implementation, others are grappling with what they believe to be scant and unclear policy guidelines. This has led to a wide degree of divergence in interpretation of the policy on WSE.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. It is easy to understand	78,9% (15)	15,8% (3)	5,3% (1)
2. It provides clear guidelines for implementation	73,7% (14)	26,3% (5)	-
3. It allows for flexible implementation	75% (15)	10% (2)	15% (3)

Table 5.2: Respondents' interpretation of WSE policy document

⁴² The number of individuals who responded to the item is given in brackets. Note that the total number does not always add up to 27 (i.e. the sample size) because respondents did not respond to all items.

In the table below I present the data with regard to respondents' understandings, perceptions and experience of WSE.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Whole School Evaluation increases the workload of educators	11,1% (3)	29,6% (8)	-	48,1% (13)	11,1% (3)
2. Whole School Evaluation is an administrative burden	8% (2)	36% (9)	4% (1)	32% (8)	20% (5)
3. Whole School Evaluation is the same as an inspection	18,5% (5)	25,9% (7)	7,4% (2)	37% (10)	11,1% (3)
4. Whole School Evaluation is subjective form of evaluation	11,1% (3)	37% (10)	14,8% (4)	29,6% (8)	7,4% (2)
5. Whole School Evaluation makes use of one set of indicators for all contexts thus benefiting the more resourced schools	11% (3)	37% (10)	15% (4)	30% (8)	7% (2)
6. Principals lack expertise of and experience in conducting self-evaluation of the school	4% (1)	24% (6)	8% (2)	36% (9)	28% (7)
7. Whole School Evaluation creates anxiety and stress amongst educators	18,5% (5)	63,0% (17)	-	18,5% (5)	-
8. A maximum of a 4-day evaluation by external examiners is insufficient to accurately determine the effectiveness of a school.	3,7% (1)	33,3% (9)	7,4% (2)	29,6% (8)	25,9% (7)
9. Educators are involved in rigorous preparations only for the duration of the evaluation and not after	-	7,4%- (2)	-	40,7% (11)	51,9% (14)

Table 5.3: Item analysis of questionnaire responses showing respondents' understanding, perceptions and experiences of WSE

A higher percentage (59,2%) disagreed that WSE increases the workload of the respondents as compared to those who agreed (40,7%). None of the respondents were unsure about this item.

The findings in the next item were aligned to the previous response. It reflected that a surprisingly small percentage (44%) of the teachers agreed that WSE was an administrative burden whilst 52 percent disagreed. Only 4 percent were uncertain about the item.

The data on the next item suggest that attitudes and perceptions about WSE being similar to inspections persist. A total of 44,1 percent of the population agreed that WSE is the same as inspection while 48,1 percent disagreed. A total of 7,4 percent of the individuals registered that they were unsure (see also Chapter 7, proposition 4).

In the table below I present the data with regard to respondents' understandings, perceptions and experience of WSE.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Whole School Evaluation increases the workload of educators	11,1% (3)	29,6% (8)	-	48,1% (13)	11,1% (3)
2. Whole School Evaluation is an administrative burden	8% (2)	36% (9)	4% (1)	32% (8)	20% (5)
3. Whole School Evaluation is the same as an inspection	18,5% (5)	25,9% (7)	7,4% (2)	37% (10)	11,1% (3)
4. Whole School Evaluation is subjective form of evaluation	11,1% (3)	37% (10)	14,8% (4)	29,6% (8)	7,4% (2)
5. Whole School Evaluation makes use of one set of indicators for all contexts thus benefiting the more resourced schools	11% (3)	37% (10)	15% (4)	30% (8)	7% (2)
6. Principals lack expertise of and experience in conducting self-evaluation of the school	4% (1)	24% (6)	8% (2)	36% (9)	28% (7)
7. Whole School Evaluation creates anxiety and stress amongst educators	18,5% (5)	63,0% (17)	-	18,5% (5)	-
8. A maximum of a 4-day evaluation by external examiners is insufficient to accurately determine the effectiveness of a school.	3,7% (1)	33,3% (9)	7,4% (2)	29,6% (8)	25,9% (7)
9. Educators are involved in rigorous preparations only for the duration of the evaluation and not after	-	7,4%- (2)	-	40,7% (11)	51,9% (14)

Table 5.3: Item analysis of questionnaire responses showing respondents' understanding, perceptions and experiences of WSE

A higher percentage (59,2%) disagreed that WSE increases the workload of the respondents as compared to those who agreed (40,7%). None of the respondents were unsure about this item.

The findings in the next item were aligned to the previous response. It reflected that a surprisingly small percentage (44%) of the teachers agreed that WSE was an administrative burden whilst 52 percent disagreed. Only 4 percent were uncertain about the item.

The data on the next item suggest that attitudes and perceptions about WSE being similar to inspections persist. A total of 44,1 percent of the population agreed that WSE is the same as inspection while 48,1 percent disagreed. A total of 7,4 percent of the individuals registered that they were unsure (see also Chapter 7, proposition 4).

The majority of the respondents (48,1%) agreed that WSE is a subjective form of evaluation as compared to 37 percent who disagreed. This could possibly relate to the fact that many teachers had first-hand experience of WSE and had realised that the feedback that they had received was highly subjective. Of noteworthy significance is the fact that 14,8 percent of the individuals were uncertain about this item.

Forty eight percent of the respondents agreed that WSE makes use of one set of indicators for all contexts thus benefitting the more resourced schools. A significantly lower percentage (37%) disagreed whilst 15 percent were not sure.

An overwhelming majority (64%) of the respondents to this item disagreed that principals lacked expertise and experience in conducting self-evaluation of the school, compared to the 28 percent that agreed and 8 percent that were unsure. An inference that could be made here is that teachers could have based their response on what they had experienced in their own school where the principal championed the implementation.

An excessively high percentage (81,5%) of the respondents agreed that WSE creates anxiety and stress. A significantly smaller percentage (18,5%) disagreed with the statement. Clearly, this data provides support for the claim that during WSE teachers undergo a period of extreme stress and pressure.

Data from the table clearly reveals that there were “mixed feelings” about whether a four-day evaluation was sufficient to accurately capture the effectiveness of a school. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the respondents agreed that a four-day evaluation was insufficient to gauge the effectiveness of a school whilst an overwhelming majority (55,5%) disagreed. What is apparent is that more respondents are comfortable with the existing four-day duration of the evaluation. A small percentage (7,4%) of the individuals were “not sure” with regards to this item.

A surprisingly small percentage (7,4%) of the respondents to this item agreed that educators are involved in rigorous preparations only for the duration of the evaluation and not after. On the other hand, an exceptionally high percentage (92,6%) of the respondents disagreed with this item clearly reflecting that the respondents at this school were of the firm belief that they worked consistently throughout the year.

Part E of the questionnaire requested respondents to provide the main reasons why WSE has been introduced. Categories of similar responses were identified. Nine categories of reasons were then subdivided into clusters of responses with a common theme. On average each teacher gave two identifiable reasons, but in some cases teachers gave one reason or did not answer the item at all. A total of 40 responses were received. These are presented in the table below:

Reason for introduction of WSE	Code	Frequency
Improvement:		17
-in standards of the system	E/a	9
-in schools	E/c	4
-in teachers	E/d	4
Poor matric results	E/b	4
Accountability	E/e	6
Identify weaknesses & provide support	E/f	3
Identify dysfunctional schools	E/g	3
Establish a merit system	E/h	1
Identify quality of work, resources	E/i	4
Identify mismanagement of funds	E/j	1
Compare standards between schools	E/k	1
Total		40

Table 5.4: Reasons for the introduction of WSE

More than half the sample (17 out of 27) responded that the main reason for introducing WSE was to effect an improvement in schools (4 out of 17), improvement with teachers (4 out of 17) or improvement in the standards of the system as a whole (9 out of 17).

A total of six respondents identified accountability as a reason for introducing WSE, whilst the poor matriculation results and identification of quality of work and resources was cited by four respondents respectively. An equal number of respondents (i.e. 3) suggested that WSE was introduced to either identify weaknesses and provide support or identify dysfunctional schools. Lastly, there was only one response to each of the remaining three reasons, that is, establish a merit system; identify mismanagement of funds and compare standards between schools.

Having focussed largely on the main reasons why WSE was introduced, I turn to the next part of the questionnaire (Part F) which attempted to elicit the respondents' views on the main challenges being experienced in implementing WSE in their school. Respondents

were requested to provide a minimum of three reasons for their opinion. Only 28 identifiable responses were received.

Challenge	Frequency
To maintain preparation/teaching up to date	7
To get the whole staff to understand the policy	4
To motivate teachers	4
Availability of funds	3
Time	2
Lack of understanding/trust between stakeholders	2
Poorly qualified supervisors	1
To provide assistance in particular areas	1
To establish a School Development Plan	1
Inadequate personnel	1
Accessing a copy of the policy	1
To deliver proof of learner's work	1
Total	28

Table 5.5: Challenges being experienced in attempting to implement WSE in school

Respondents were invited to provide their assumptions, beliefs and perceptions of WSE by responding to statements presented to them in Part G of the questionnaire. The findings to each item are reflected in the table below. A close study of the table reveals the following:

Whole School Evaluation:	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. creates opportunity for feedback to educators.	37,5% (9)	45,8% (11)	12,5% (3)	4,2% (1)	-
2. creates opportunity for feedback to parents about the school's progress.	25% (6)	50% (12)	12,5% (3)	12,5% (3)	-
3. promotes the need for a school development plan.	33,3% (8)	45,8% (11)	12,5% (3)	8,3% (2)	-
4. calls for district offices to actively support schools.	41,7% (10)	37,5% (9)	8,3% (2)	12,5% (3)	-
5. has been introduced because of poor matric results.	33,3% (8)	29,2% (7)	8,3% (2)	8,3% (2)	20,8% (5)
6. is an attempt by the department to make dysfunctional schools effective.	56,5% (13)	39,1% (9)	4,3% (1)	-	-

Table 5.6: Respondents' assumptions, beliefs and perceptions of WSE

An overwhelming percentage (83,3%) of the respondents to this item indicated that WSE creates opportunity for feedback to educators. A significant percentage of the respondents were not sure (12,5%) as to whether WSE had the potential to do so. However, a small percentage (4,2%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

Of interest as well is that the majority (75%) indicated that WSE provided opportunity for feedback to parents about the school's progress, (12,5%) disagreed and an equal percentage (12,5%) of the respondents were unsure about this item.

The next statement sought to elicit views of the respondents as to whether WSE promotes the need for a school development plan. An examination of the data reveals that 79,1 percent of the respondents to this item agreed with the statement whilst 8,3 percent disagreed. Noteworthy too, is the fact that 12,5 percent of the respondents were not sure. This simply reflects that a significant percentage of the respondents were not aware of the official aims of WSE.

The role of districts is profoundly significant in the implementation of WSE. The next item sought to elicit the respondents' understanding of the role of the district in the policy implementation. A large proportion of the respondents (79,2%) to this item agreed that WSE calls for district offices to actively support schools. A striking 12,5 percent of the respondents disagreed and 8,3 percent were uncertain. This provides further sound evidence that teachers are not clear about the roles and responsibilities of the district in the WSE implementation process.

Several reasons have emerged from interviews as to why WSE was introduced. Item 5 and 6 in Part G of the questionnaire are reasons generally given for the introduction of the WSE policy. The data reflects that an overwhelming majority (62,5%) of the individuals indicated that WSE has been introduced because of poor matric results. To recapitulate, the interview data as well as the free writing schedules provide further supporting evidence for this. Only 29,1 percent of the respondents to the item disagreed with the statement and 8,3 percent were uncertain.

The vast majority of the respondents (95,6%) to this item unanimously agreed that WSE is an attempt by the department to make dysfunctional schools effective. The remaining respondents (4,3%) were uncertain.

Several people argue that WSE is developmental rather than judgmental. In Part H of the questionnaire the respondents were requested to respond to a number of given statements

concerning the developmental aspect of WSE. Their responses to the statements are represented in Table 5.7.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Whole school evaluation will enable the school to establish its weaknesses	33,3% (8)	54,2% (13)	12,5% (3)	-	-
2. The school development plan will focus on areas in which training is to take place	30,4% (7)	52,2% (12)	17,4% (4)	-	-
3. District and provincial offices will provide constant support.	9,1% (2)	13,6% (3)	31,8% (7)	45,5% (10)	-
4. Systemic evaluation results will compliment Whole School Evaluation	22,7% (5)	45,5% (10)	22,7% (5)	9,1% (2)	-
5. Whole School Evaluation encourages me to intensify my preparations for teaching and learning	12,5% (3)	33,3% (8)	20,8% (5)	20,8% (5)	12,5% (3)

Table 5.7: Respondents' understanding of WSE

There were no respondents that disagreed with the item that WSE will enable the school to establish its weaknesses. However, whilst 87,5 percent agreed a significant percentage of the respondents (12,5%) to this item were uncertain showing that there were gaps in their understanding as far as the value of the policy was concerned.

On the next item, a disconcertingly high percentage (17,4%) of the respondents were uncertain as to whether the school development plan would focus on areas in which training is to take place. The inference that can be made here is that respondents did not have a clear understanding of what aspects the school development plan will include. The remaining 82,6 percent of the respondents to this item agreed with the item.

A total of 45,5 percent of the respondents to the next item disagreed with the statement that district and provincial offices will provide constant support, compared to 22,7 percent that agreed. At best, it may be reasonable to infer that teachers have not been exposed to constant support from district and provincial offices and therefore disagreed or reflected that they were uncertain (31,8%).

The divergence in the next item is even more dramatic. A remarkable 68,2 percent of the respondents to the item agreed, whilst 9,1 percent disagreed with the statement that SE results will compliment WSE. A very high percentage (22,7%) of the respondents were

concerning the developmental aspect of WSE. Their responses to the statements are represented in Table 5.7.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Whole school evaluation will enable the school to establish its weaknesses	33,3% (8)	54,2% (13)	12,5% (3)	-	-
2. The school development plan will focus on areas in which training is to take place	30,4% (7)	52,2% (12)	17,4% (4)	-	-
3. District and provincial offices will provide constant support.	9,1% (2)	13,6% (3)	31,8% (7)	45,5% (10)	-
4. Systemic evaluation results will compliment Whole School Evaluation	22,7% (5)	45,5% (10)	22,7% (5)	9,1% (2)	-
5. Whole School Evaluation encourages me to intensify my preparations for teaching and learning	12,5% (3)	33,3% (8)	20,8% (5)	20,8% (5)	12,5% (3)

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The divergence in the next item is even more dramatic. A remarkable 68,2 percent of the respondents to the item agreed, whilst 9,1 percent disagreed with the statement that SE results will compliment WSE. A very high percentage (22,7%) of the respondents were

uncertain. This is highly consistent with the findings from the interviews where teachers indicated that they were not aware of SE.

A higher percentage (45,8%) of the respondents agreed that WSE encourages them to intensify their preparations for teaching and learning, compared to 33,3 percent that disagreed. Data from interviews indicate that many teachers were involved in arduous preparations prior to the evaluation whilst others were not. A total of 20,8 percent of the respondents to this item were uncertain.

A recurring trend in all of these items is the uncharacteristically high percentage of the sample whose responses fell within the “uncertain” category. Thus, it may be reasonable to infer that many of the respondents do not clearly understand the principles and the process of WSE, as well as the WSE policy relationship to other evaluation policies.

In the next section I provide narratives of interviews conducted with teachers at *Wagpos* High. A common description of what WSE entailed resonated with most practitioners. For the principal, these teachers and many others WSE simply meant:

- *I understand that WSE is an initiative to evaluate schools in order to improve the whole school* (Principal 15/05/2002).
- *They are going to check that our preparation and the things we do in class are correct* (Focus group 1 16/05/2002).
- *Personally, I thought that the idea is to come in and have a look, not necessarily to criticise, but more to come to the aid of teachers, to help them* (Elize 21/05/2002).

Unsurprisingly, some teachers likened the process to an inspection as reflected by the following quotations:

- *Sort of an inspection but not that you have to fear the inspection* (Sartie 24/05/2002).
- *WSE is an inspection of everything that's going on in school, that is, files, preparations etc* (Focus group 1 16/05/2002).

Whilst some teachers believed that the process was similar to an inspection others were completely unsure as to what the process entailed reflecting this openly in their responses, as this particular teacher did:

I don't know if I have an honest answer. Mrs H just said to me this morning that she was very glad that Maths and Science people could join because then it really looks like the whole school is being evaluated. So I think I can only go from the word "evaluation" and that they are evaluating the teachers' work, but teachers' work is evaluated in the pupils' work (Marilene 21/05/2002).

She then elaborated by disclosing her uncertainty about the process:

But in the WSE, we don't know, are they digging into figures, are they just coming to look whether we are teaching properly....We've heard that other inspectors are opening files, checking preparation dates, taking kids' books, checking that the work was done, seeing that they correlate (Marilene 21/05/2002).

Also, whilst some teachers remained calm about the uncertainty others bluntly enunciated their frustrations regarding the shroud of uncertainty hanging over the process, as reflected by this teacher's remark:

I have a problem here because they don't give us anything to work with or anything that tells us how to do things, that is, no guidelines (Focus group 1 16/05/2002).

The responses relating to *what the policy was responding to* varied markedly from emphatic confessions of having no idea to the basic idea of being an attempt to improve teaching and learning in schools. Let us consider the following varying ideas on why the policy was released.

I don't know. I think the same thing, to help and uplift or come to the aid of teachers (Elize 21/05/2002).

For another teacher, the basic idea was to grade schools as reflected in her remarks below:

They have a grading system, I'm not sure if it's A, B or C. We may be graded as an A school, B school or classed as a C school. If we are a C school we would then need help to move towards the A goal point (Marilene 21/05/2002).

Other recurring ideas forwarded included to improve matriculation results, improve discipline within the school and encourage teacher development so as to raise the standard of education.

Practitioner *roles in both policy development and policy implementation* were elicited. None of the teachers indicated that they had any direct role to play in the development of

the policy. The principal, however, indicated that he did have the opportunity to provide input through his union and was also fortunate enough to attend the principals' symposium in Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape Province, where he had the opportunity to also provide input.

An intriguing array of responses was received with regard to teachers' perceptions of the role they were expected to play in implementing the policy. The principal saw his role as champion to plan, organise and institute control in the implementation process. He also saw himself as a key agent of change – setting the stage for communicating the WSE initiative as positively as possible. The SMT also expressed that they had a pastoral role to play (i.e. having to instil a positive attitude in their teachers). The general trend that emerged with the SMT interviews is reflected in the following official's remarks:

After the feedback if there are any problems in my department, you have to look at these faults and not do it again. We have got a school policy, a subject policy, and if there are any criteria that we have to do better at, we have to do it. I will have to see that teachers under me do the improvements (Hansie 24/05/2002).

Many of the teachers, on the other hand, felt that their chief role would be to maintain a standard in teaching and equip their pupils for life after school. This teacher candidly stated her role as follows:

I think to try and be a good teacher or to try and make the kids enjoy their subjects. And really try and do my work to the best of my ability, even the administration side of it (Elize 21/05/2002).

Other teachers were very cautious when they reflected on the role they intended playing with regard to implementation.

- *But I won't play a managing role; I will just be part of the group that implements whatever the decision is (Marilene 21/05/2002).*
- *Provide assistance to those doing external evaluation. To implement things they give us to do, that is, to implement what the department wants (Focus group 1 16/05/2002).*

The vast majority of teachers reflected similar ideas, which showed a strong sense of compliance with the WSE process (see Chapter Seven, proposition 6).

Generally, teachers were not very vocal in expressing the *goals of the WSE policy*. The principal who had difficulty with identifying the main goals of the policy concluded by stating that the main goal is an attempt to improve matriculation results and to get a standard to measure up to. Teachers expressed similar sentiments, that is, “*to get all people to do their work because there are schools and people that don't prepare or do their work*” (Focus group 1 16/05/2002).

Severe difficulty was experienced by all practitioners as regards identifying the *similarities and differences between WSE and other evaluation policies*. The principal did not have a clear and concise understanding of the continuities between WSE and DAS and desperately attempted to provide a response explaining that:

WSE ...includes listening to the opinion of children and parents, but which doesn't exist in DAS. It is a broader evaluation to get more opinions from other stakeholders (Principal 15/05/2002).

When I asked him about the similarities and differences between the three evaluation policies he conceded:

No. It's difficult because at principal level we weren't informed about it and these are my own conclusions (Principal 15/05/2002).

It is hardly surprising then that teachers at the school had no clue about SE, what it entailed or what the similarities and differences between this policy and the others were. A small proportion of the teachers had an idea of DAS and how this policy had to be implemented but experienced grave difficulty when asked to explain the continuities and differences between this policy and WSE. Other teachers simply responded that they were not aware of the DAS policy and hence they could not respond to the question. A somewhat startling comment since this policy, as I had been informed, was being implemented in the school! Although teachers in the technical department had been actively involved in implementing DAS they could also not explain the interconnectedness with WSE, except for differentiating between the key focus areas in each of the policies.

One variation was that some teachers felt that there were no similarities between DAS and WSE at all, as this teacher comments:

No, I don't think it is quite the same thing. This thing you were talking about (DAS) this is on the individual. What we are going through now, it's on the whole school, so it's different. I see it as two different things (Sartie 24/05/2002).

She further explained her experience with DAS:

We chose some colleagues to evaluate us (and) we filled in some forms. We did it but there it stops. There was no feedback, we never heard anything really (Sartie 24/05/2002).

Teachers were very forthright in explaining the **challenges that they were facing in implementing WSE** at *Wagpos*. A major constraint was defined as *teacher attitudes* as many teachers were not convinced of the benefits of the WSE. They had very “real” experiences of other policies being implemented and not being followed up with monitoring and evaluation. The principal described the main constraint as follows:

There aren't many but I think the main constraint is the fact that school personnel aren't very positive. They must be made to see that there can be a positive outcome from this. Teachers and administrators aren't against WSE but ask “what afterwards?” They can't see the purpose and what will happen later. This is the problem with DAS that initiates all this but where nothing happens afterwards (Principal 15/05/2002).

Closely associated is the element of *teacher fears* of WSE. This teacher explained the teacher fears as well as offered a suggestion on how the problem should be dealt with holistically.

They (teachers) don't feel comfortable with themselves or with the organisation. That is why personally I think the government should spend more money and time on training teachers. Improve their education because some of them it's not their fault. And perhaps they do not have a good idea of organisation and doing things methodically (Elize 21/05/2002).

Another constraint which will profoundly influence WSE policy implementation at *Wagpos* is the critical resource, *time*.

There is just no time...There's no unwillingness to become involved but because everyone is so busy and teachers have a full programme each day, it's very difficult (Principal 15/05/2002).

There were *too many policies* to be simultaneously implemented. Many did not have a clear understanding of the policies and hence found implementation difficult. In response to this, a teacher explained:

If you understand what each policy is all about, there's no problem (Sartie 24/05/2002).

Finally, since there was no compensation by way of *pay increases or merit awards* for the teachers, many teachers seriously questioned as to whether they should comply.

Although the challenges facing *Wagpos* are many, there are some factors that are prevalent, which *influence the implementation of the policy*. First and foremost, there is a positive atmosphere pervading the school with the staff acknowledging a sense of ownership of the school (see also Chapter Four). The principal's impression of the staff was that they were, "...willing to promote the image of the school and to work hard. Staff who will always walk an extra mile and not expect payment for any extra they do" (Principal 15/05/2002).

Also making a positive contribution is an active, fully functional and dedicated school governing body which:

Is part of the team and are involved each and every day with given tasks in particular portfolios, for example, farming activities, fundraising, finances and hostel. They're part of the team, they also manage and control other teams and are a pillar of the system (Principal 15/05/2002).

The principal's strong leadership qualities coupled with an undying positive spirit also "spilled over" onto the staff. A member of the SMT expressed the following view:

He (the principal) told us that we must speak to our teachers in our department and to ask them not to be negative about this thing. It is going to be a positive thing at the end of the day (Hansie 24/05/2002).

Others felt that the strengths of the school included being organised and disciplined, a willingness to share knowledge and assist one another and maintenance of open communication on a regular basis existed. Teachers expressed a sense of deep commitment and confidence in their work as reflected by the following quotation:

I think we are quite open-minded. I think our work is right, so come and see what we do. I think everything is running quite smooth in the classrooms and in the administration offices (Sartie 24/05/2002).

Synthesis

The exploration into teachers' understandings of WSE policy yielded a sea of data. I will crystallise the principal findings with reference to the research question of how stakeholders understand WSE policy in the school context. I supplement this discussion on the collage of perspectives on teacher understandings of WSE policy with commentary on some of the findings.

In general, most teachers did not have a copy of the policy document. They were not exposed to any training or workshops and many resorted to their own interpretations of the policy document which was made available to them through a circular. Their understandings were thus influenced by their previous experiences of inspections, and by exposure to a myriad of understandings from others both in and outside the school environment (see Chapter 7, propositions 4 and 5). It can be argued that acquiring information in this way will undoubtedly result in teachers possessing varied understandings of the WSE policy.

Evidence indicates that attitudes and perceptions about WSE being similar to inspections persist (see Chapter 7, proposition 4). Opinions were split with regard to whether WSE was an administrative burden and as to whether it increased teacher workloads. Teachers that were vehement about WSE resulting in increased workloads experienced fatigue and role overload from trying to be innovative and receiving no training and guidance in the process.

There was an overwhelming consensus among the respondents that WSE is a subjective form of evaluation (see also Chapter 6, section 6.3.1). The question of concern then is: To what extent will teachers heed the advice given to them? This remains one of the difficulties of dealing with the policy. The majority of respondents agreed and few were uncertain that one set of indicators benefited more resourced schools – again confirming that teachers were not aware that the indicators applied will be specific to the school context. There were “mixed feelings” about whether a four-day evaluation was sufficient to gauge

the effectiveness of a school. The majority of the respondents agreed that this time span was sufficient. My personal view is that the timeframe must be dependent on the size of the evaluation panel and the size of the school. Obviously, more evaluators will be in a position to cover more “ground” and thus the conclusions drawn will be easier to justify as well. Therefore I do not consider the allocation of a standard period of time for all schools a sensible strategy.

Unsurprisingly, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that WSE creates anxiety and stress amongst educators (see Chapter 6, section 6.1.1). There is recurring evidence of teachers having experienced high levels of pressure and stress prior to the evaluation and even during the evaluation. My concern here is that teachers’ evaluations were based on their performance in a 30-minute lesson. Teachers were fully aware of this and some were able to live up to expectations. What happens to those teachers that are dedicated and committed but are unable to “shine” in the presence of evaluators because of stress or anxiety? There were examples of such cases at *Wagpos* High – how then do we address this?

There was a very high percentage of teachers that disagreed with the statement that educators are involved in rigorous preparations only for the duration of the evaluation and not after. This response can be explained by noting the commitment and dedication of *Wagpos* teachers to their work shown mainly by the hours that they spend after school engaged in coaching learners as well as by the outstanding regular attendance of all teachers (see Chapter 4).

One reason, which was cited frequently for the introduction of WSE, was improvement, that is, either in the standards of the education system, in schools or in teachers. The less common reasons cited were accountability, poor matric results and the identification of quality of work and resources to name but a few. Teacher views also varied with regard to the nature of the main challenges that faced implementation at *Wagpos*. The three challenges appearing most frequently were: difficulty of maintaining preparations/teaching up to date; getting the whole staff to understand the policy and motivating teachers. The difficulty of maintaining preparations/teaching up to date could be due to the fact that teachers were engaged in several other activities at the same time, for example, hostel duties or extracurricular activities.

Getting the entire staff to understand the WSE policy would require a dedicated and concerted effort initially from the principal since he was the only person who had received training. Other initiatives could include subject department workshops where teachers have the opportunity of interacting directly with the policy. The principal could also elicit assistance from the provincial department since he also confessed to being unsure about aspects of the policy.

The lack of motivation among teachers could be the result of a combination of factors, for example, policy overload, lack of understanding, lack of incentives etc. Motivating teachers both intrinsically and extrinsically is thus a challenge that has to be embraced if we are to be successful with effecting change (see section 7.4).

There was strong consensus that WSE: creates opportunity for feedback to educators; creates opportunity for feedback to parents about the school's progress; promotes the need for a school development plan; calls for district offices to actively support schools; has been introduced because of poor matric results and is an attempt by the department to make dysfunctional schools effective. A matter of concern, however, was the unusually high percentage of respondents that chose the "uncertain" category for each of these statements reflecting that although the majority of the respondents agreed there were still many that were unsure or, worse still, in disagreement.

5.4. District support

Items which sought to illicit teacher understandings about the developmental aspect of WSE yielded consensus with regard to statements that WSE will enable the school to establish its weaknesses (87,5%); be complimented by SE results (68,2%), and focus on areas in which training is to take place (82,6%). A high percentage (45,8%) of respondents also agreed that WSE encouraged them to intensify their preparations for teaching and learning. A disconcerting finding was the alarmingly high percentage (45,5%) of respondents that disagreed and were uncertain (31,8%) that district and provincial offices will provide constant support. This finding could be explained in the light of teachers' previous experiences with support from district and provincial offices – where the general feeling was that assistance was not forthcoming. Again, there were uncharacteristically high percentages of respondents that were uncertain about the statements.

A striking finding from the interviews was that there was a gap in teachers' understandings of the similarities and differences between the three evaluation policies. All the teachers, including the principal, acknowledged that they did not know about SE. The reason for this could possibly be that SE was at that time only targeting primary schools and since *Wagpos* is a secondary school they did not have an opportunity to interact with the SE policy. Even more surprising was the fact that several teachers could not express the similarities between WSE and DAS, despite the fact that *Wagpos* was involved in implementing the DAS and WSE policies. This could be explained by considering that teachers were not formally trained for the implementation of either policy.

There is overwhelming evidence that indicates that there was a wide gulf in the understanding of the policies between the teachers and the other category of individuals (i.e. national officials, the consultant, provincial officials, district officials and union officials). Another reason (apart from those already mentioned) is that teachers were completely left out of the policy formulation process and were only afforded opportunity to comment on the policy through their unions. Finally, there was an even wider difference in the understanding of teachers when compared to what the document analysis revealed as the intentions of policy. Put simply, some teachers were right off the mark in terms of their understanding of policy intentions.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter, which dealt with the critical question of exploring stakeholder understandings of WSE policy in the school context, also provided insights into policy analysis as this was deemed necessary for providing a platform for explaining stakeholder understandings.

The WSE policymaking process was dominated by a rational approach. Such models are criticised because “the model does nothing to guarantee the desirability of values fed into it or even the validity of the facial assumptions made” (Simon 1983). Hogwood and Gunn (1984:50) identify five categories of limitations to rationality in decision-making behaviour: *psychological limitations* (lies in the individual policymaker's powers of cognition and calculation); *limitations arising from multiple values* (problem of values is exacerbated when we move from individuals to collective rationality); *organisational limitations* (organisations fail to provide information needed); *cost limitations* (it costs to be

rational in terms of time, energy and money) and *situational limitations* (the policymaker does not write on a clean slate, he or she does not decide in a vacuum). The WSE policy-making process was dogged by the limitations noted above.

Lindblom (1968) goes beyond identifying limits to rationality and demonstrates that real-life policymaking has internal logic. This was shown by the fact that WSE policy was developed through bargaining, negotiation and compromise (“partisan mutual adjustment”) and by the interaction of many policy influentials operating in a power network (“polycentricity”). What has also been shown is that policymaking is “serial” (we keep coming back to problems, mistakes are corrected and new lines of attack are developed – WSE and DAS are still being reconciled!).

It is not surprising therefore that the WSE policy degenerated into an incoherent framework severely lacking “joined up” thinking with other evaluation policies. How then are stakeholders expected to have a coherent understanding of a policy that is seriously flawed in design? Consider a related dilemma – multiple stakeholders operating at various levels are expected to implement the policy. The policy message has to be carried through these levels to implementers – constantly being interpreted and reinterpreted. Reading of policy also involves the active creation of the reader’s own meaning and not the passive reception of someone else’s; consequently different readers will assign different meaning and emphases to the same terms. Distortions in meaning also seldom arise as role-players are immersed in the changing contexts, which shape and re-shape their conceptions of WSE policy. The landscapes in which the stakeholders operate are characterised by the complex intersection of social, political, historical and economic influences, which are unique to their contexts.

Stakeholders furthest away from the policy development process also reflected a superficial and sometimes incoherent or confused understanding of policy. The evidence indicates that there are astounding differences in the conceptions of WSE policy among department officials, the consultant and union officials, as compared with the teachers. Teachers’ understanding of WSE policy within the same school – in the same subject department, as well as across departments, also varied markedly. Teachers in particular have developed experiences of “inspection” in relation to the specific educational landscape within which they are embedded. These conceptions are organic and were constantly being redefined as

the forces for substantial change are compelling. In general, the teachers at *Wagpos* were looking for predictability, stability and process – a world knowable through rational, reasoned thought. They found extreme difficulty with embracing the diversity, uncertainty and confusion which surrounded them.

The scenario is no different when one considers the evidence on stakeholder understandings across the various levels of the education system. The gulf between National, Provincial and District officials' conceptions of the WSE policy and teachers' understanding of the practical implementation of WSE is also wide. Evidently, stakeholder understandings of policy, that is, both Department officials and teachers, also differed in varying degrees to policy intentions as revealed by the policy analysis.

How will stakeholders implement the WSE policy in the school context? How will these disparate stakeholder understandings influence policy implementation in the school context? These are the subjects to which I turn in my next chapter, which I present in a detailed narrative form.

This chapter comprises three sections. In Section One of this chapter, I describe how *Wagpos* first came to be informed of the WSE and what pre-implementation preparations the school undertook; this enables one to understand the process prior to implementation and also sets the stage for future expectations. Then I turn to the self-evaluation conducted by the principal and the SMT. By recalling the personal experiences of the principal and others, I intend to recapture views of those involved as well as problematic stages and key stages of the policy implementation process.

In Section Two, I trace the external evaluation project as it unfolded at the school. During the duration of the entire evaluation I note the influence of the external evaluation team at the institutional level. Here, I also note my personal involvement in the process as well as

⁴ Director of the Union Pacific Railroad, reported in a letter dated 1 March 1874, consulting a member of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Commerce against opposing some pending regulatory railroad legislation.

Chapter Six

Policy Implementation in the School Context

“No matter what sort of bill you have, everything depends upon the men, who, so to speak, are inside of it, and who are to make it work. In the hands of the right men, any bill would produce the desired results...”

Charles Francis Adams, Jr⁴³ (quoted in Fullan & Pomfret 1977:335).

6.1 Introduction

The narrative presented in this chapter describes and explains how the WSE policy was implemented in the school context. This chapter illustrates how social, political and educational concerns of stakeholders intersect during the process of policy implementation in the school. The story as I reconstruct it is based on data derived from researcher observations, documents, photographs, teacher diaries and many transcripts of interviews. I attempt to understand, express and explore the ideology of the implementers, to capture the plethora of emotions and undercurrents which the evaluation generated, and to identify the key implementation issues that were raised in the process.

This chapter comprises three sections. In **Section One** of this chapter, I describe how *Wagpos* first came to be informed of the WSE and what preliminary preparations the school undertook; this enables one to understand the process prior to implementation and also sets the stage for future expectations. I then focus on the self-evaluation conducted by the principal and the SMT. By recalling the personal experiences of the principal and staff, I intend to recapture views of those involved as well as provide some insight into the early stages of the policy implementation process.

In **Section Two**, I trace the external evaluation process as it unfolded at the school. During the duration of the entire evaluation I note the influence of the external evaluation team at the institutional level. Here, I also note my personal involvement in the process as well as

⁴³ Director of the Union Pacific Railway, reasoned in a letter dated 1 March 1884, counselling a member of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Commerce against opposing some pending regulatory railroad legislation.

the roles played by the many others in the implementation process. I present critical experiences of role-players during the course of this process.

In **Section Three**, I present the events that transpired at the school after the external evaluation. I revisit the district in order to foreground the role played by the district in advancing policy implementation at the school.

In all three sections of this chapter, I narrate the worlds of two teachers in the school who were given extensive freedom to “tell their stories” from their perspectives. I share excerpts from their diaries kept throughout the WSE policy implementation process. These excerpts have been infused into the narrative account. The intent is to place these lived experiences within the institutional context. I present the excerpts of their testimonies in a manner that tries to maintain a degree of flow, as opposed to a content or thematic analysis, which I believe would interrupt the flow and destroy the subtleties and nuances that accompany the revelations in the diaries when they are kept intact (per phase of the evaluation).

I do, however, revisit the recurring issues in the final chapter, within the larger framework of theorising about change in a context undergoing transformation.

Methodology

Deciding on the most suitable way to capture the subtleties and nuances of the unfolding of the WSE policy in the school context was an extremely difficult choice. Having worked through several drafts I eventually settled on writing this chapter in the form of a detailed narrative. This would enable the reader to live the process as it unfolded, experiencing the mood, trauma, frustration and excitement of the “insiders” to the process. Data for this chapter has been collected over a period of one year by multiple methods of data collection, that is, interviews, observations, document analysis, photographs and diaries. Interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers at key stages in the WSE process. Other stakeholders, such as district officials and provincial officials (including the external evaluation team involved) were interviewed in order to obtain the different perspectives of the wide range of stakeholders in order to provide a holistic picture of the WSE process. Individual as well as focused group interviews were conducted. Interviews varied with regard to duration, that is, some were as short as 20 minutes (mainly to gain impressions

and insights into the implementation on a day-to-day basis – in these instances only handwritten notes were taken) whilst others were of about one-and-a-half to two hours. All the taped interviews were transcribed and emerging patterns and themes were drawn. Field notes also taken during the observation of key events were analysed to identify patterns.

The narrative account is “coloured” with moments of reflection of two teachers on critical incidents during the five key phases of WSE, that is, preparation for evaluations; self-evaluation phase; external evaluation phase; school development planning phase and implementation of school development plan. The teachers were selected based on their willingness to participate; the teaching experience and their positive attitude towards the policy. They were requested to keep a diary for each of the phases of the WSE process and were expected to make five entries for each phase. This is represented diagrammatically as follows:

Phase		No. of entries				
		1	2	3	4	5
One	Preparation for self-evaluation/external evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
Two	Self-evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
Three	External evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
Four	School Development Planning	1	2	3	4	5
Five:	Implementation of school development plan	1	2	3	4	5

Teachers did not adhere strictly to the requirement of five entries per phase – sometimes the numbers of entries were more or fewer. Guiding questions for the entries were also provided. Diaries focused on the questions as well as on other critical incidents that occurred. These were key events that stood out during the period, that is, a significant episode set in a particular time and place. Such an event was seen as constituting a specific moment that stood out in the teacher’s experience of the WSE. Critical incidents were reported as one entry. Teachers also reported on their conversations with others, their observations and personal reflections of the processes as they unfolded.

Teachers were also asked to explain in as much detail as possible their experiences of inspections during the apartheid era. They described what happened, where they were, who was involved, what they did, and what they were thinking and feeling in the event. Also,

they conveyed what impact these events had on them as individuals as well as how this has influenced their understanding and implementation of WSE.

The teachers make reference to peak experiences, that is, “high points” during the WSE policy implementation process. These are reflected as moments or episodes in their stories in which they experienced extremely positive emotions, like joy, excitement; great happiness; upliftment or even deep inner peace. They have described what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what they did, what they were thinking and feeling and what impact this has had upon them. Teachers also described “low points” in their experiences with inspections in the past and the WSE process of the present.

In looking back at the process the teachers identified a key turning point in which they had undergone substantial change in their understanding of the WSE process. This they described in detail. Overall, the evidence from the diaries captures the mood, trauma, frustrations and excitement of the “insiders” to the WSE process.

In this section I attempt to present these teachers, diverse as they are, in a clear and concise way making them as vivid and memorable as possible. I assume the role of narrator of the two teachers who were part of the research process. The text is interspersed with commentary, judging and interpreting the actions of the role-players.

Throughout this chapter I use a medical metaphor⁴⁴ to explain the WSE process. There are striking similarities that may be drawn between WSE and the process that an individual will follow in diagnosing their status of health (this could be either in the event of a routine check up or if he or she is ill). And this I have reflected on in my presentation of the key proposals of WSE. The patient in this case is *Wagpos* High School.

⁴⁴ This metaphor was inspired by the work of Miles, MB. 1998. Finding keys to school change: a 40-year odyssey, in *International handbook of educational change* edited by Hargreaves, A, Lieberman, A; Fullan, M & Hopkins, D. Great Britain: Kluwer Academic Publishers:37-69. The idea of the health of an organisation was further extended by my own creative labellings.

Section One

6.1.1 Self-evaluation

And so the story begins. It was during the summer of 2001 that *Wagpos* learnt that they were to be evaluated. The fascinating dynamics of this mandated educational change and its incomplete implementation unfolded during the remainder of the 2002 academic year. *Wagpos* was one of two secondary schools in the Brits district selected by the Department for the first wave of Whole School Evaluations in the North West province.

A teacher's diary captured the mood at the school when the initial news of WSE was received.

There was a very negative reaction amongst teachers when the WSE was first announced. They asked a lot of questions to the principal but no answers were given. Some questions were: Why did they (the evaluators) have to come to our school when we had a 100 percent pass rate? Why not the "troubled" former black schools? What do they want to achieve? Is it just another way to discourage or take on the former white schools? If it is not the integration that is slow, is it the language policy that they attack?

Teachers feel that it is a total onslaught on white schools. Many people came to me since I am the Union Representative for our school as well as the Brits-Rustenburg area, wanting to know what the union opinion was on WSE. I contacted our office and the answer I got was to inform the membership to cooperate as far as possible. The union attitude was to do nothing and to ask them (the evaluators) not to come. People were very angry and blamed the principal because they actually thought it was his idea and that he invited the WSE team. For the next few days, people were antagonistic to the whole idea (Chaart 10/03/2002).

A letter that was sent to the school concisely stated the required documents and a date for the impending visit.



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5 Maart 2002

Aan: Die Hoof
Die Hoërskool Wagpos
Brits
0250

Meneer

Voorbesoek: Maandag 18 Maart 2002

Na aanleiding van ons telefoniese gesprek wil ek graag die volgende sake met u bevestig:

- Ek besoek die skool op Maandag 18 Maart 2002 om 08:30
- Ek en u bespreek die evalueringsproses en ek ontvang die dokumentasie soos per aangehegte lys.
- 'n Vergadering met die bestuurspan van die skool oor sake rakende die skool, byvoorbeeld die effektiwiteit van die leerproses.
- 'n Kort vergadering met die personeel tydens pouse.

Ek sal ook graag op die skoolterrein wil rond beweeg om 'n idee van die opset te kry.

Ek sien daarna uit om u, die personeel en die leerders te ontmoet.

Dankie byvoorbaat vir u samewerking.

Mev. A Hartman: Groepleier Heelskool Evaluering

#26 Letter: (2002) "Letter from evaluation team leader to principal".

The patient prepares for the medical examination: Preparation for self-evaluation

Preparation for self-evaluation at *Wagpos* began in a flurry on 5 March 2002 as soon as the principal was informed that he should have completed the self-evaluation documents and have submitted these by the 18 March 2002. This meant that there were only nine school days to complete all the requirements for the process. Equipped only with what he had learnt in a one-and-a-half day workshop, which was also attended by 50 other principals of the Brits district, the principal summoned his school management team and jointly decided how they were going to meet the deadline. Evidently only the principal had received training and even he conceded that the training did not adequately equip him for the task he

was to lead and control at his school. In order to provide the support, sound leadership and guidance expected of him, he was forced to refer to the available documentation (guidelines and policy) on the process.

Preparations, which included collating the necessary documentation as was listed in the letter from the team leader of the external evaluation team, was done with relative ease at *Wagpos*. This was facilitated by the fact that prior preparations were completed in November 2001, when the department had requested all staff not engaged in marking matriculation examinations to remain at school for that period. The staff had seized this opportunity to update the school policy and school development plan.

Support

No specific external support was received in preparation for implementation of self-evaluation at the school. The governing body did, however, complete sections of the school financial policy, which was mutually agreed upon as their responsibility. The circuit manager did visit the school but this occurred at least two hours after the self-evaluation documentation had already been submitted. Despite the late arrival of the circuit manager the principal viewed this gesture from the district in a positive light.

As regards external collaboration and networking with cluster schools, teachers explained that the school did not team up with any other school to discuss what should be done as there was no time to meet during a regular school day. Extra classes or extracurricular activities were cited as obligations to be fulfilled after school hours.

The doctor's diagnosis: Conducting the self-evaluation

The principal and his SMT (a total of six individuals) conducted the self-evaluation from 14:00 until 17:00 over three successive afternoons. Each member of management was given the documents to work on individually but thereafter they met as a team and completed one form for the school, after giving due consideration to the individual ratings and then reaching consensus on a final score for each of the nine focus areas to be evaluated.

One SMT member expressed that he was confident when making judgements as he had engaged in book controls and review of teacher preparations just prior to the self-evaluation process. Others claimed that they had also conducted class visits and reviewed teacher preparations and learner documents so they felt comfortable about rating these sections in the document.

Abiding by policy principles

The crucial dimension of WSE is that it is a standardised process. On closer observation there are several aspects of the self-evaluation that were not done in accordance with policy principles.

Firstly, the principal served as evaluation co-ordinator as he suggested that he was unaware that the school was required, according to policy stipulations, to elect a co-ordinator whose role it would have been to serve as liaison between the school and the evaluation team.

Secondly, class observations were not conducted during the self-evaluation process not only due to the apparent lack of time but because of the principal's deeply held views that it would have potentially disrupted the school programme. His sentiments are reflected below:

It is the basic right of each child to be educated and if I take that privilege or basic right away from children, I am the problem. ...I don't intend to interrupt a school programme and take away the basic right of the children if I am not convinced that that is in favour of the child and I was not convinced that this WSE was of such importance so as to interrupt a whole school programme (Principal 15/05/2002).

Thirdly, the student questionnaire was not distributed to a sample of students nor were students informed that the school was engaged in self-evaluation.

Fourthly, questionnaires were not distributed to the parent body hence their inputs were also not incorporated in the analysis. Interestingly, several members of the management team were completely ignorant about the existence of such a questionnaire or the need to include these inputs into the final self-evaluation report.

Fifthly, there were definite mixed signals among teachers concerning whether they were informed about the self-evaluation process that had occurred. Clearly, the SMT was informed since they had participated but the majority of the teaching staff were confused and indicated that they were unaware of the self-evaluation process that preceded the external evaluation. There was consensus though that the principal informed them about WSE during a staff meeting. It became apparent that they did not fully understand that WSE encompassed both the self-evaluation component and the external evaluation. The principal afforded the following explanation for the lack of greater involvement in the process:

This was because the school management team agreed upon the nine focus areas each time and reached the same conclusion, that is, a four. It wasn't necessary to get all staff involved because the school management team was fully representative of both staff and children (Principal 15/05/2002).

Atmosphere during the self-evaluation

The principal conceded that throughout the process he was a “little stressed” as he was uncertain about whether he had correctly responded to the requests in the letter from the external evaluation team leader. On the contrary, the process did not seem to affect teachers at all since they were not informed about it. The following is an excerpt from a teacher's diary:

No self-evaluation took place. The headmaster did visit some teachers in March and that does always cause tension in the staff room, as we never know who is next on his list. No report of any teacher was mentioned or discussed. There were rumours that a teacher's lesson would be put on video for all of us to watch, but that didn't become a reality (Marilene 22/04/2002).

All documents requested were properly packaged in advance of the team leader's arrival to *Wagpos*. On the 18 March 2002, the external evaluation team leader visited *Wagpos* as promised. Fears of teachers were allayed when the team leader briefed them for approximately 10 minutes about the impending external evaluation.

A teacher described the salient points in Mrs H's talk in the following way:

...she said to us that we must please not paint and polish. We must be normal, relaxed, do what we do everyday. And I think that this has helped us because we have met her, very briefly, and that we know that she was an ordinary teacher, like ourselves and that she is not trying to come here to find mistakes. She is here to help. I think that is the feeling we got from her (Marilene 20/05/2002).

The school then closed for a short vacation, but before closure of school, *Wagpos* teachers and learners swept classrooms, and organised furniture and books in preparation for the new term. The school was to re-open on the 12 April 2002, the day on which the external evaluations were to take place.

Analysing the “history and progress chart” of the patient: *Findings from the self-evaluation*

A comprehensive yet unsophisticated template was used for self-evaluation reporting. The first eight pages dealt with basic information about the school, that is, school’s contact details; physical and postal address; learner and teacher population; subjects offered; financial matters etc. The remaining nine pages of the document focussed on each of the nine focus areas as identified in the WSE policy, that is, one page dedicated to each focus area. The school was expected to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, provide supporting evidence, include comments by the DST and SGB and provide an overall rating on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is very good; 1 is very weak).

The report in general was concise and all nine focus areas were rated 4. However, the comments section, which was expected to be completed with inputs from the DST and SGB, was not completed reflecting that these inputs were not sought at the time of the report being drawn up.

Impressions on the “laboratory findings” - Impressions on the self-evaluation process

Wagpos High had not anticipated the process and had not scheduled WSE on their school programme of activities for the year. For them the request to conduct self-evaluation was ill-timed and placed tremendous pressure on the school management to deliver on time. Evidently the self-evaluation process was rushed, with previous data (classroom observations) being used for responses to certain questions. One could argue that this stance

was taken mainly due to the stringent timeframes that they were working towards. At this stage the school had already abandoned the implementation of the DAS policy due to several logistical problems in implementing it. The principal had also discontinued his own form of appraisal.

Evidently parents, learners and the school governing body inputs were not incorporated in the final analysis and report. Clearly there were several adaptations to policy processes simply to suit the school context.

The understanding among the SMT of the process varied with some being more familiar with the WSE process than others. Teachers at the school were totally oblivious of the process whilst it was taking place behind closed doors in the confines of the principal's office and the SMT's offices. The prevailing culture at the school appears to be one where decision making is confined to management – there is no involvement of level 1 teachers.

No external assistance was obtained for the implementation of self-evaluation. However, a district official arrived after the process was completed with the offer to assist. Clearly rules were bent and corners cut to ensure that the school submitted as per requirements so that it would not appear incompetent in the face of the department.

Section Two

6.2.1 External evaluation

Getting a second opinion: *The specialist's diagnosis*

On the 12 April 2002, the principal received a call informing him that the external evaluation was not going to take place. Screams of jubilation by some and outbursts of frustration shattered the countryside calm of *Wagpos* on receiving the news (Principal 15/05/2002). The following is an abstract from a teacher's diary on his feelings.

I felt like an athlete that prepared for an event. I was ready – I had just finished my warm-up session and suddenly the time changed. They told me that it (the evaluation) is postponed until further notice (Chart 2002).

The principal displayed on the staff notice board the letter from the Superintendent General, Dr A.M.Karodia, which clearly outlined the reason for the postponement of WSE. The letter read:

In view of the logistical dynamics, relating to amongst other things, the fiscal new year we have had to unfortunately review the dates of the external evaluation at your school. This in essence means that we will have to postpone the actual school-based evaluation for at most a couple of weeks. Whilst we concur that this may cause some inconvenience to you, we however, request your kind understanding in the matter. (Letter from DoE, 4 May 2002).

Teachers speculated about problems with SADTU, the largest teacher union, although the letter did not make any mention of it. The media covered a number of articles on WSE and the refusal of SADTU to accept the policy as it was. Appearing in the press was SADTU's call for an urgent moratorium on WSE followed later by a joint media statement with SADTU and the DoE.

17-5-2002 SADTU CALLS FOR URGENT MORATORIUM ON WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION (WSE)

South African Democratic Teacher's Union Media Release 17 May 2002

The national executive committee (NEC) of SADTU meeting at Birchwood Hotel, Kempton Park today resolved to oppose the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) programme as imposed by the education department. "We advise the authorities to institute a moratorium on the implementation of this archaic system," the NEC said in a statement today.

The union has opposed the WSE on a number of grounds in particular because it is being "imposed upon educators" and is "punitive and not developmental". SADTU has for years called for a developmental appraisal system (DAS) which the department has agreed to, as part of a collective bargaining agreement during 1996, but "unceremoniously reneged upon". DAS is meant to address the need for teacher development and training, as well as all assessments of teacher quality which can only be "measured against the investments (inputs) made by the education department" SADTU said.

The union is embarking on a programme of mass action, which involves mass meetings, marches and demonstrations. A dispute to the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) is being considered. In addition, SADTU lawyers have been approached to consider an urgent legal action.

#27 Press release: 17/05/2002, SADTU calls for urgent moratorium on WSE

<http://www.sadtu.org.za/press/>

21-5-2002 Joint Media Statement with department of education
and SADTU - Whole School Evaluation (WSE)

Joint Media Statement WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION Pretoria, 20
May 2002

A delegation of the South African Democratic Teachers Union led by its President Mr Willie Madisha and its General-Secretary Mr Thulas Nxesi met with the Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal, MP and Director-General Mr Thami Mseleku and senior officials of the Department of Education in Pretoria today to discuss problems arising from the implementation of the policy on Whole School Evaluation. This policy was approved by the Council of Education Ministers, and gazetted in August 2001.

It was agreed at the meeting that there was in principle support for evaluation systems in education, including a system of Developmental Appraisal as well as Whole School Evaluation, and that both of these necessitated classroom observations to ensure quality in education.

However SADTU raised concerns regarding the implementation of the classroom observation component of Whole School Evaluation, and it was agreed that these would be considered by a Task Team, which will table its recommendations on or before 5th June 2002.

The Ministry would write to all provinces to request them on their implementation to ensure compliance with the letter and developmental spirit of the policy and DAS, and to ensure that classroom observations were conducted with the necessary sensitivity, care and deliberation.

Provincial education departments will be encouraged to meet with SADTU structures in order to discuss the management of the situation, pending the report of the Task Team. In the interim, SADTU undertook to request its members to act with restraint in their dealings with supervisors, and that where necessary concerns would be conveyed to the provincial authorities in accordance with the provisions of the policy.

An urgent meeting of the relevant SADTU structures would be called to inform the discussions, and the CEM meeting of 10th June 2002 would aim to finalise the matter.

It was agreed that the broad aim of the above processes was to avoid disputes about the implementation of national education policy. The recent media headlines about "war being declared" by SADTU were not consistent with the media statement released by SADTU.

#28 Press release: 21/05/2002, Joint media statement with Department of Education and SADTU- Whole School Evaluation

<http://www.sadtu.org.za/press/>

These reports were also followed up by broadcasts on local television about incidences where supervisory teams were prohibited from entering some of the township schools. Reports of school gates being locked and the stoning of some officials also made the local television and radio news.

It was exactly five weeks later that the school was to be evaluated. *When I went to school on 20 May I was up to date and ready.*

The staff at *Wagpos* was informed of the arrival of the evaluation team at least three working days in advance, that is, on 15 May 2002. The principal made the announcement of the impending visit to the staff during the tea break in the staff room. Obviously the air in the staff room was tense and for some there was disbelief that it was really going to happen since they were already aware of the deadlock in negotiations between the union and the DoE.

The following abstract from a teacher diary aptly captures the moment:

I wish it was Friday, I wish it was finished. We don't know what to expect, how long they are going to be here, how many lessons are they going to be here for. We sort of feel that it's unfair because it (the evaluation) is sort of focusing on Afrikaans and English and one or two other subjects and not all the subjects. We feel if it was a WSE it should be a panel of specialists for all the subjects. Because at our school especially, it's more the, with due respect, it's more the Maths and Science where the kids are failing and they are not being inspected. The languages, which we do pass, we manage to get these Afrikaans kids through with English, we are being inspected (Marilene 20/05/2002).

Although the next few days were filled with regular academic work and afternoon sports activities, the topic of the WSE still dominated conversations in the staff room. Teachers spoke about their preparations/lessons and insisted that learners bring in books to have them marked and brought “up to date”. Some teachers embarked on a massive spring-cleaning campaign whilst others simply left their classes as they were. Preparations for the WSE took place in many diverse ways (see pages 208-210).

A teacher's personal reflections in her diary entry were as follows:

I heard on Wednesday 15 May 2002 that WSE was on again! It was with mixed feelings that we heard the news. The previous time in April, when we were all geared up and ready, with lessons prepared, the WSE was cancelled. We heard it was due to unions protesting against “inspections”. On Thursday 16 May, we saw how some schools in Alexandra area didn't receive WSE very gracefully and I was quite shocked at their violent demonstrations/reactions.

It struck me that I had a lot of work to do. I had to get my files in order again, catch up with the forms in all files. I was also pressured with the idea that I had to get my marking up to date, as all the written work should be in the portfolios. I forced myself to put in a lot of

extra hours on 16 May and over the weekend on 18 and 19 May. When I went to school on 20 May I was up to date and ready.

I hadn't polished the class or prepared any special lessons, as I knew I had to do the work that I'd questioned the pupils on in a test, for the next week and prepare them (the pupils) for the forthcoming exams.

Luckily all my exam and test papers were set before I'd heard of the WSE, as that would have increased my tension, 1000 times!

I started teaching in 1982 and over the years was subjected to many inspections, so I don't really "fear" the inspection, but I do know that when they (evaluators) walk into the classroom myself and the pupils aren't natural as always.

My work planned for the week is a new cycle and amongst others "If – sentences". Most pupils find this quite difficult and I just hope I can present my lesson so that they grasp everything.

When I left school today I felt I couldn't really do much more and had to just wait and see what happened and for which and how many classes they (her) Ms Hartman planned to come to (Marilene 20/05/2002).

The day before the evaluation

On Monday morning, 20 May 2002, I arrived at the school – a day before the evaluations – mainly to capture the after-school activities that pupils engage in. In fact, I was responding to an invitation from the principal who earnestly felt that in order for me to get a holistic picture of the school I needed to visit the school on a Monday afternoon because that was when learners worked on the farms. The tea break on this day was very different from other days because the principal addressed the staff and reiterated that WSE was to take place the next day. Present at the announcement was also the SGB chairperson. Sandwiches were provided for the staff (not a common occurrence) and they were encouraged to partake in the snacks – not that many of them still had an appetite after the news, which confirmed the arrival of the WSE team on the next day. The principal's words of encouragement rang out loudly in the staff room, "*eet maar gerus en kragte vir the volgende vier dae*⁴⁵!"

The mood was sombre – some teachers milled around in the staff room after the buzzer sounded whilst others moved briskly to their classrooms. I then grabbed the opportunity to

⁴⁵ English translation: "eat at ease and may you have strength for the next four days".

elicit teachers' responses on the impending evaluation. Many of the teachers were eager to see and speak to me since it had been a few days since my last visit to the school. It appeared to me that others simply wanted to talk about how they were feeling at that moment and I had presented the perfect opportunity for them to talk. I listened very attentively to the fears of some and to the confidence of others as they expressed themselves. The following quotations succinctly capture the atmosphere that prevailed at *Wagpos* the day before the evaluations.

- *It doesn't matter my work is no problem. I don't care...I invite the principal to my class* (Hansie 20/05/2002).
- *I think we are worried. I heard the ladies say they are worried, because they are not worried enough. You know – should we be more worried? Should we be more tense? I'm not quite sure what to think, what to expect, what to feel* (Marilene 20/05/2002).
- *The worrying factors that are coming out is the OBE. Because we've got those evaluation forms and no one has done them, and you know, are we going to be criticised for that* (Marilene 20/05/2002).
- *A bit nervous, not knowing what they expect of us. Are they going to ask or advise, look at the kids' books, are they going to ask questions. Which type of teaching do they want, you are not sure what they expect of you* (Chaart 22/05/2002).

In my conversations with most people on this day, similar expressions of confidence, fear and uncertainties surfaced. Complaints about the vagueness of requirements and expectations were commonplace. One of the teachers was extremely pleased that he was going to be away from school the next day as he had earlier in the year planned an excursion for a team of technical students to a motor production plant in Pretoria, the capital city of South Africa. Another one of the teachers, who has over 28 years of teaching experience, was said to be suffering from diarrhoea the entire day because he was nervous about the evaluations!

Although teachers did not disagree with the necessity for WSE many expressed their dissatisfaction with the timing of the process. Many considered that particular period as the busiest time of the year as they were engaged with completing sections of the curriculum and simultaneously preparing examination papers and learners for the examinations.

The principal, on the other hand, indicated that he was not stressed or nervous as he viewed WSE in a positive light. His expectation was that he would be informed on what to improve on and would be disappointed if this did not occur at the end of the process. He did, however, concede that:

I don't know really what to expect. Seeing is believing. So I can see tomorrow what focus areas they concentrate on (Principal 20/05/2002).

Despite the principal being confused about what to expect the common thread that emerged from the interviews with teachers was that they were also confused about what to expect.

I think that is a problem, which faces most teaches, and that is we don't know what they are going to do and what they expect of us (Hansie 20/05/2002).

Unsurprisingly, every teacher interviewed indicated that they felt that the purpose of the evaluations would be defeated if they were not provided with concrete feedback on what and how to improve. If such recommendations were not forthcoming then the entire process would be viewed as “worthless”.

Preparing for the external evaluation

Teacher preparations

None of the teachers had received specialised training for WSE. The information that they had received had come from the principal who had issued them with forms outlining what they were to expect with regard to the lesson observations only. Subject departments did not meet to specifically plan or discuss aspects of the WSE. Also, none of the teachers indicated that they had planned their work in collaboration with other teachers in the school or with colleagues in other schools. In fact, no dedicated information sharing sessions on the contents of the WSE policy took place in the subject departments. The principal remained the key source of information on the matter. One teacher admitted that she gained more knowledge about WSE from a newsletter, which she received from her son's school. The contents of this newsletter were shared with the principal and staff of *Wagpos*.

Wagpos did not take the lead in instigating any contact with other schools within the cluster in order to prepare for the external evaluation. In fact, during this time a principal and teacher from one of the neighbouring schools in the district visited the school to request for assistance from *Wagpos* in the area of technical drawing. *Wagpos* is held in high esteem for their outstanding matriculation technical drawing results.

Many teachers were engaged in what they described as “finishing touches” that is, marking learners’ books, filing away documents and encouraging learners to update their work. Others worked long hours after school over the three days, as well as during the weekend to have their work up to date, admitting that they worked harder than usual. In the final countdown to the evaluation many teachers engaged in special clean-up operations in their classrooms.

The following are the confessions of teachers regarding the preparations that they had engaged in:

- *I have probably done a bit extra. I’ve thought up a questionnaire, which I probably wouldn’t have thought of* (Marilene 20/05/2002).
- *My husband said to me, he can even notice that I’m tense. Because I tried to catch up with work this weekend, which I don’t usually do. So I’ve sort of forced my schoolwork on my family, because I have to just be up to date* (Marilene 20/05/2002).
- *Well, I have (i.e. done special preparations), they are doing a passage on sleeping and snoring problems and things like that. In the old Readers Digest, there is quite an interesting article on that. So I might just quote from that, or refer from that, or read some parts, yes* (Elize 20/05/2002).

The next abstract from a teacher’s diary captures what kinds of preparations were done in the school in general and what he had done in particular. He also presents his version of the atmosphere at *Wagpos*.

Files were changed even if there was nothing wrong with them. Files were checked by the HOD. Changes were made and more preparations were done than before. I had to write each lesson out – I do not normally do this. I gave homework, and also wrote down the answers to the homework. We were also asked by the principal to write everything down on transparencies. If one looked at my preparations on paper and the preparations on transparencies, it was exactly the same. The principal did not understand that it was the

same and so I had to repeat the work. I got the feeling that nothing was good enough. I use my blackboard a lot and suddenly I have to do everything on transparencies. The weekly planning forms were suddenly changed as well as the preparation forms. The way that I marked my books wasn't good enough and that had to change as well at the request of my superior.

The stress levels increased a lot and more "arguments" took place amongst the teachers. As the day approached, the stress levels increased even more. People started to disagree with things that were not an issue before whilst others disagreed on things that they agreed on previously. Arguments were mainly about what is to be done and by whom, supervision of learners when a teacher is absent, and supervision of learners during breaks.

Time was valuable – there was a lot to do. Even the children started to react differently. They started to feel the pressure the teachers are putting on them to get everything in place. They started to moan about the sudden increase in homework, the scripts that must be neat (more than before) and the pressures to perform well. I also felt that more pressure is being put on me to perform – it was as if I was preparing a lesson for a professor at university! In addition I got a lot of extra duties to perform.

... The principal's control system had also stopped before external evaluation. I did not have to send my files in every week to the HOD. Suddenly the (principal and HODs) also stopped walking into my classroom to see if the classroom was neat, and clean and that my files were on my desk (Chaart 2002).

Parents

Although parents were informed about the evaluations at the end of the first school term through the regular school newsletter no specific assistance was made available to the staff by the parent body. The principal had also informed the governing body chairperson telephonically as soon as the date for the external evaluation was confirmed. The chairperson visited the school briefly on the day before the external evaluations – solely to provide moral support.

Learners

Learners, on the other hand, were informed by their teachers that a panel of external evaluators would be visiting the school to conduct evaluations on returning from their first term. The second notice of the evaluation many teachers reflected that they received a lot of encouragement from the learners, especially when asked to bring in their work.



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Brits
0250

19 Maart 2002

OMSENDRIEF 2 VAN 2002

Geagte Ouer / Voog

Aan die einde van die eerste kwartaal wil ons 'n opregte dank rig aan elkeen wat bydrae gelewer het. Dit was weereens 'n besige kwartaal en die leerders het presteer op verskeie terreine.

GEHEELSKOOLEVALUASIE

Graag bring ons onder u aandag dat Die Hoërskool Wagpos besoek gaan word deur 'n evaluasiespan van die Departement vanaf Dinsdag, 9 APRIL tot Vrydag, 12 APRIL. Die fokus-areas waarop hulle gaan toespits is:

1. Basiese funksionaliteit van die skool.
2. Leierskap, bestuur en kommunikasie.
3. Beheer en verhoudings.
4. Kwaliteit van onderrig en leer en onderwyser ontwikkeling.
5. Kurrikulum voorsiening en hulpmiddels.
6. Leerder-prestasie.
7. Skool veiligheid, sekuriteit en dissipline.
8. Skool se infrastruktuur.
9. Ouers en gemeenskap.

ALGEMEEN

Baie dankie vir u lojale ondersteuning die afgelope kwartaal. Neem asseblief die vrymoedigheid om oor enige saak te kom gesels, raad te gee of selfs net te kom groet.

Die uwe


D.J. NEETHLING
HOOF

#29 Newsletter: (2002) "Correspondence from Wagpos High to parents"

Learners

Learners, on the other hand, were informed by most teachers that they were to expect the panel to visit classes to conduct evaluations on return from their first term holidays. On the second notice of the evaluation many teachers reflected that there appeared to be more commitment from the learners, especially when asked to bring in their books.

The principal, on the other hand, expressed a sense of confidence and said that he was looking forward to the evaluation team's arrival the next day. I dwelled on the principal's words to his staff as I drove back to Pretoria that afternoon and thought that the staff would certainly need the strength to survive the next few days!

External evaluation team preparations

Whilst *Wagpos* was preparing for the arrival of the supervisors, it was no surprise that the supervisors were themselves gearing up for the external evaluation of *Wagpos*. Soon after the team leader's visit to the school she had called on a meeting of all team members to distribute all the documentation and information she had collated about the school. Her personal expectations of the team and the policy implementation process were discussed with the team members who were also granted the opportunity to choose focus areas that they had expertise in. Rigorous discussions on the preparation of timetables and subjects to be evaluated were also covered during this meeting.

External evaluation

I struggled to sleep that night – perhaps because I constantly thought about those teachers who were worried about the evaluation as well as the fact that I had to also be on the road very early the next day as the school day at *Wagpos* begins at 7 am. I approached the school at first light and was mesmerised by the beauty of the blanket of mist covering the top of the Langeberg Mountains. *Wagpos* lay quietly nestled at the foot of these mountains. No one could imagine what the next few hours would be like!

Staff arrived at the school promptly that morning – in fact many of them came in a few minutes earlier than usual and settled themselves in their “designated” seats for the usual morning meeting. The air was filled with chatter from a group of anxious female teachers.

It appeared that the peace and tranquillity was shattered by the arrival of the evaluation team. The team was then promptly introduced to the staff by the principal and following these preliminaries the evaluation team informed the principal of their plans and requested a room that they could work in. They also requested that parent questionnaires be distributed to learners to take home for parents to complete and return by Thursday or

Friday morning at the latest. In addition, a meeting was secured for Thursday evening with the school governing body. The team was informed that they would be treated to a traditional braaivleis⁴⁶ after the formal school governing body meeting – an event most welcomed by the team.

Although the evaluation team had worked out a lesson observation timetable in advance, there were minor adjustments to be made. With their express permission I worked out my plan with regard to which of the evaluators I was to accompany for classroom observations during the week. I was amazed at the warmth and openness with which the team embraced me. I was immediately made to feel part of the team.

A detailed timetable for class visits for the entire period of the evaluation was pinned on the notice board for all to see, allowing teachers to prepare in advance for the lesson observations. There was no room for surprises in the scope of things! This arrangement suited the teachers well.

For the rest of the day I observed lesson after lesson noting activities and events as they progressed. I chose mainly Biology lessons, as this is a subject that I had taught for many years at secondary school level. I also witnessed various feedback sessions, and noted that there was substantial variation in what evaluators said to teachers. Some evaluators simply left for the next class without a word, while others took 5-10 minutes at most to comment on what they saw, what improvements are possible, what practice in other schools looks like or provide a written feedback report with comments on various aspects of the lesson. Teachers overwhelmingly valued this information and opportunity for discussion.

I deduced that the evaluation team members varied in their philosophies about providing advice; some were dedicated to detailed feedback, others were simply not. The pressure of time, however, made discussions fleeting at best. Some of the teachers even voiced their opinions that the 20-minute segments for lesson observations were too short, the “snapshots” did not allow evaluators to see a full lesson. Clearly, teachers resented being observed without being able to put the lesson in context, to explain how it fits into the

⁴⁶ Synonymous with barbeque in other western countries where meat is grilled over an open fire

year's progress and to interpret the difficulties of particular students. Teacher corrections of evaluator's perceptions were almost impossible to make given the circumstances.

Of all the lessons I observed that day a lesson on electrical theory was profoundly disturbing. On arrival at this class we found the teacher relaxing outside enjoying a cigarette whilst some learners threw pieces of chalk at each other in the classroom. The learners' hysterical laughter emanating from the class was deafening. The teacher appeared unconcerned and led us into the classroom. On our appearance some learner's appeared perplexed with their jaws hanging, others scurried to their seats whilst some just stood there like frozen snowmen.

The teacher then delivered a lesson, which was of approximately 10-minutes duration. It appeared to me that he felt obliged to teach because we were there! This was meant to be an hour-long period. For the rest of the time the learners were engaged in copying down copious notes from their textbooks whilst the teacher walked around the classroom reviewing notebooks. At intermittent moments the teacher would pause to reprimand the learners who were obviously bored with this type of activity. Mr L's lesson on electrical theory was definitely one where minimal teaching and learning took place!



#30 Photograph: (2002) "Classroom observation: Lesson on electrical trade theory".

A remarkable feature of the lesson observations was the amount of information and expertise on teaching that they generated. However, the specially designed template for recording observations encouraged the truncation of information when recording each classroom observation – the immediacy of the classroom experience was lost forever. Results were summarised for specific departments, causing further loss of information for the individual teachers in each department. The evaluators clarified that no individual scores were to be reported, thus eliminating the view that the purpose of WSE was to root out incompetent teachers. Whilst two evaluators busied themselves with paperwork, I wondered whether the 20-minute segments for classroom observation were sufficient to begin looking at details of classroom interactions or were they simply reacting on the basis of their feelings about the gestalt of the class.

At the end of the day we trudged along to the boarding school dining hall for a well-deserved lunch that we had arranged for earlier that day. Learners had already queued in straight lines outside the hall doors waiting to be beckoned into the dining hall. I found myself having to respond to the many “*goeie middag tannie*” greetings, that I received as I entered the hall. The especially reserved table was already laid out for me and the evaluation team. Being vegetarian, I had made prior arrangements with the kitchen for my meal. Much to my satisfaction a steaming plate of wholesome vegetables (all grown on the *Wagpos* farms) was served to me. All future meals at the dining hall were very much the same – no one complained, as the only other alternative would have been to drive into the town for lunch, which was a good few kilometres away.

That afternoon we made our way to the cattle pens for a demonstration by students studying animal husbandry. Learners were engaged in establishing the gestation period of the unborn calf within the parent. The evaluators were in awe watching the learners conduct their practical session with confidence. Of course, we were invited to participate but we politely declined.

I had arranged an interview with Derrick, one of the evaluators, for later that afternoon. Derrick provided me with the impressions of the day’s evaluation. He was confident that organisation was good and that everything had gone off very well. He was, however, perturbed by the teaching and learning programme that he had witnessed in one of the classrooms. On my way home that afternoon I reflected on the day’s events – in fact I

thought to myself that the evaluation team had been well prepared and had conducted the day's proceedings in a professional manner. To me, this was definitely not a case of the evaluators "making it up as they went along".

I had to drive to *Wagpos* with extreme caution the next morning as the roads were wet from the previous night's rain and the mist made it impossible to see even a short distance ahead of me. I arrived whilst the staff meeting was in progress. It was here that I first learnt that two additional evaluators with expertise in Mathematics and Physical Science had joined the team. This did in fact disorientate the teachers because they had already received the timetable of who was going to be visited during the tea break on the first day. Furthermore, the Mathematics and Physical Science teachers were not really expecting a visit. In interviews with other teachers I found that there was consensus that it was fair because the Mathematics and Physical Science results were not as good as other subjects and therefore they could not understand why these teachers were not going to be evaluated in the first instance. The arrival of the two evaluators seemed to please many of the teachers though the Mathematics and Science teachers may not have viewed it in the same light!



#31 Photograph: (2002) "The external evaluation team after the arrival of two new members".

I interviewed several teachers on the views about the previous day's events. Some of the responses were as follows:

- *I went through two inspections, way back when I started in the Education Department and I think yesterday, as I heard from the other people, it was “mild” against what was done in those years (Karel 21/05/2002).*
- *I hated yesterday because I knew she was going to Anna and Elize and that was nerve-wrecking because I had to wait the whole night until this morning. Monday night I was fine. Last night I lay in bed and this lesson was in my head, “should I do this?” and “shouldn’t do this?” So my night wasn’t good. Coming to school today I was thinking “Is this going to be okay?” But when she walked in, it was fine (Marilene 21/05/2002).*
- *So far I’m quite pleased, although I think they will discuss this with us later. But we haven’t really got an idea. She (evaluation team leader) said yesterday that she was satisfied and happy, but perhaps they do have some guidelines to sort of improve, or do it another way, I don’t know (Elize 21/05/2002).*
- *Relaxed, a lot more relaxed. For two nights I didn’t sleep ... Yesterday morning I actually woke up at half past two, this morning it was half past three (Chaart 22/05/2002).*

The second day was marked by more lesson observations, interviews with teachers and interviews with the evaluation team members. I observed that many of the teachers did not come to the staff room for the regular tea breaks – a somewhat different pattern from the regular practice. Instead, I found teachers in little groups outside the staff room sharing their unique experiences of their lesson observation sessions with one another. Many of the teachers who were expecting the evaluators to visit them after the breaks preferred to remain in their classrooms to make sure that “everything was in order”.

A teacher who learnt that she was to be evaluated made the following entries in her diary:

11.40 on the 21 May 2002

Heard that I shall be visited tomorrow morning first period. This is now nerve-wrecking. Wish it were over. Don’t know if my lesson will work. This part is horrible!!!

13:00 on the 22 May 2002

I had Ms H for the first period and I felt that the class was relaxed and enjoyed the lesson. The feelings and questions and answers went off well. She asked me questions about my teaching experience and the staff and I got the idea she was happy with my presentation.

I have been told that I shall not receive an individual report, but we will get a report for the department as a whole. Today, I feel the staff being comfortable, getting to know the faces

of the inspectors and seeing the lessons go down well. I feel great that my lesson is over and that it went well! (Marilene, 22/05/2002).

This was not the case for another teacher who made the following entry in his diary.

An evaluator visited my Grade 10 and Grade 12 class to observe me teach. The children were quiet. They weren't their normal selves. Normally they will participate in the lesson but on this day they were quiet. They said nothing! When I asked a question, nobody wanted to answer. I was forced to ask them individually and even then I got answers like "I don't know" even though I was certain it is possible for them to answer. I stuttered a bit but kept on delivering my lesson. It was so abnormal to have the children that quiet. Then one of the Grade 10 learners asked a question which was not related to the work. I felt betrayed! I was trying so hard and I could not answer the question. I put so much time into the preparation. To set up the transparency, get practical examples, write out the lesson, write down the homework, and try to hold their attention, to make the lesson as enjoyable as possible. The lesson was on such a theoretical part of the curriculum. It was such a difficult part of the work – microbiology and mathematics (Chaart 2002).

Soon after a hearty lunch, the evaluation team met to discuss their reporting strategy, which was already scheduled for Friday morning at 10am. This was the first team sharing exercise on initial reflections on *Wagpos* High. As it turned out, this was an interesting and powerful team feedback session, which actually laid the foundation for the forthcoming oral and later the written report. Unsurprisingly, the meeting was dominated by the topic of the lack of transformation in the school coupled with a lack of vision on how this was to take place in the future. Tensions ran high among the evaluators (the two Afrikaners and the others who were Black) with one of the “others” proposing that the facilities, for example, workshops at *Wagpos* be shared with neighbouring schools, mainly black rural schools that essentially lacked these facilities. I thought to myself that this was a matter that was not going to be settled that easily among the team members let alone the school. I watched and listened with extreme fascination at how the team leader (Afrikaner) handled the matter – in response she said:

Can I tell you where their gardens (gardens at Wagpos) come from? The principal said that when they started here the gardens were in a terrible state, so what they did was they divided the school grounds into plots, giving it to classes. So this is something from the learners and the parents' pockets, you know to answer your question. I mean it was an initiative from these learners so they can actually share

the idea with other schools, not necessarily give them flowers (Team leader 22/05/2002).

In the strong dialogue that ensued between the team leader and team member, the team member suggested that it was important that the school capture, in their policies, some information on how the school was planning to adapt – the basic idea was not only to put plans into policy but to practice it! The team leader, appearing uncomfortable, agreed to raise the issue in the oral report and to provide some recommendations. The effectiveness of the various policies at the school were discussed at length, including those policies that needed to be amended, for example, with regard to safety precautions in the workshops. Apparently, the school had a very unique and effective school discipline policy operating (mechanics of this was described by the team leader) as well as the existence of a professional support programme for “problem cases” at school.

Critical inputs on the principal’s leadership style as well as the outstanding strategies that were employed with regard to communication were shared with the group. The team leader was of the opinion that the principal had done a sterling job with regard to delegating tasks to others in the school, citing at length the numerous examples she had to support her statements. Her rendition was in no uncertain terms a glowing presentation of an exceptional principal. Although the rest of the team did not respond, it appeared to me that they did not agree with *all* of her observations (a kind of silent disagreement!).

The next team member who provided his impressions on teaching and learning expressed that there was a need for more training on OBE and more specifically on the different strategies for assessment. Learner homework was a contentious issue at *Wagpos* – with some teachers indicating the homework given to learners and others regarding unfinished class work as homework. In general, teachers did engage in continuous planning, followed the curriculum as best they could, kept minutes of meetings held, updated assessments in mark books etc. There were difficulties reported in the area of supporting the curriculum with appropriate resources because certain types of machinery considered essential for teaching was out of order or unavailable. There was consensus that there was ample evidence of learners’ work displayed in classrooms and on the walls in the school.

The team spent a few minutes discussing views on the school's participation in extracurricular activities such as sports, cultural activities, drama and debates. Evidence of the school's accomplishments (trophies and framed newspaper articles) in the various codes of sport were proudly displayed in the school entrance hall for every visitor to encounter on arrival. The issue of sport kindled intense debate and steered the discussion once more into an unexpected direction when one team member suggested that soccer be introduced into the conservative Afrikaner *Wagpos* High. There was an almost deafening silence that followed and then the expected response from the team leader:

You can't play soccer here; it is an Afrikaans school. Only rugby. The traditional game is rugby in this school (Team leader 22/05/2002).

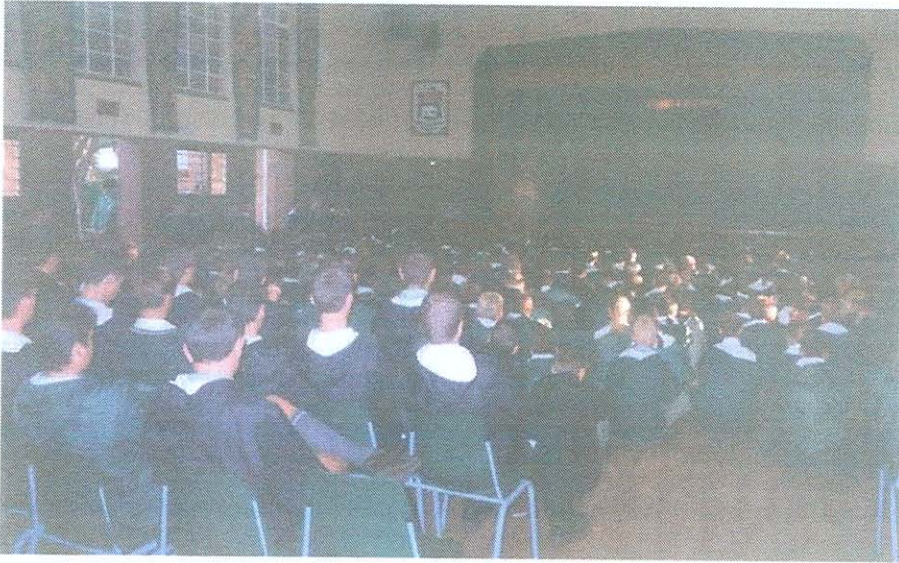
Again, the team member (the same person) who initially raised the issue of transformation at *Wagpos* responded:

That's where the transformation of the school comes in. If they want to attract black learners to these facilities they must have soccer. It will be politically correct (Lebo 22/05/2002).

The other focus areas did not seem to warrant deep discussion and these were glossed over superficially. The team members simply presented their reflections and the others listened. At the closure of the meeting, the team leader reminded team members of their responsibilities and the new members were allocated areas that they had to report on in the next session. As we bade farewell to each other that afternoon we noticed a hive of activity around the school hall area. None of us knew what was happening but we were sure that we would find out the following morning.

Loud music pervaded the grounds of the usually quiet *Wagpos* High on that Thursday morning as I drove into the schoolyard and parked my car at the usual spot. I followed the music to the school hall where I found some learners seated on the floor, others on chairs, teachers seated at the back of the hall and some of my colleagues from the evaluation team also formed part of the audience. A group of ten learners were busy doing a modern dance routine to a famous pop song. The audience was engrossed in the performance, so much so that even the teacher that I sat next to did not notice my entry into the hall. The dance routine was followed by various announcements and the handing out of achievement

certificates to the learners for various codes of sport. The programme culminated with a loud rendition of the school song by all in the school.



#32 Photograph: (2002) “Programme in the school hall”.

That day the school times were adjusted to compensate for the morning’s programme, which had extended way into the academic programme. The day commenced with lesson observations by some evaluators whilst others negotiated times with members of the SMT to discuss specific issues that they were expected to report back on. The lunch break was also secured for interviews with learners. By 9 am that morning, another department official arrived and we were informed that she was at *Wagpos* in the capacity of a monitor. I soon realised that she was more senior than the evaluators and wondered whether some of the evaluators’ sudden reservations on their views of how the evaluation was progressing had anything to do with her presence. She observed a maximum of two lessons that day and had very brief, if any, contact with staff and learners. She was polite enough not only to make available to me copies of her monitoring forms, but also to make herself available for an interview before the closure of the school day.

At midday the piercing shrill of the buzzer shattered the silence in the school. Almost instantly the air was filled with the sound of learners shouting and feet thumping on the corridors. As the learners emerged from all corners and began converging on the grounds we slowly made our way to the school library where we were expecting to meet with selected learners from different grades. Being already familiar with the location of the school library, I led the way.

The door was already open and learners had gathered in the room anxiously awaiting the arrival of the external evaluators. The musty smell of old books greeted us as we entered the room that was already abuzz with the sound of eager learners. Within minutes the evaluators had grouped the learners into two groups of six learners – balanced in as far as gender and grades is concerned. While the interviews were underway, curious learners slipped into the library and hovered around the shelves pretending to be engrossed in looking at the limited collection of outdated books displayed. Other learners who simply could not resist positioned themselves in “statue-like” forms around the groups being interviewed.

The learners appeared relaxed and seemed to be thoroughly enjoying the interview. The responses were spontaneous and punctuated with several moments of childish giggles. The evaluators moved swiftly through their lists of questions – not stopping to probe deeper into responses because it appeared to me that the exercise had to be completed during the 20-minute break (only 12 minutes after the delay in setting up). Similar interviews were being held concurrently in the classroom opposite the library. These interviews continued into the next period as it took the evaluators some time to arrange the many learners who arrived for the interviews into groups.

That afternoon I managed to speak to the principal about his views on how the process was progressing. He expressed his feelings openly as follows:

I experienced the evaluation very positively. I am prepared to write a letter to Dr Karodia (Director-General of Education in North West) and thank him for the people he sent to us to evaluate the school (Principal 24/05/2002).

Time was negotiated with the team for a report-back session prior to the planned meeting with the school governing body at 6pm that afternoon. It was decided that the team would not meet straight after lunch that afternoon because South Africa’s famous soccer team Bafana Bafana was playing against Turkey in Japan. Being the ardent soccer supporters that they are, three of the evaluators managed to convince the team leader that they should meet at 4:15 pm that day and not 2 pm as was initially arranged. The team did meet that afternoon and were in high spirits as Bafana Bafana scored a 2-0 victory against Turkey in the match. The evening’s events with the governing body went off smoothly and the relevant data was gathered.

The conversations of the next morning were dominated by the previous evening's governing body meeting. My colleagues spoke about the good quality meat that they had braaied as well as the fact that there was ample to eat and drink. There was a very slow start to the morning as most supervisors were completing final documents. Indeed, it appeared to me that the process of conducting the WSE was partly a paperwork blizzard, with forms accumulating as the week progressed.

The number of lesson observations on this day was drastically reduced. Some evaluators appeared completely relaxed and even took time off to visit the *Wagpos* farms. The stroll in the gardens proved worthwhile, as these supervisors were fortunate enough to secure vegetables for the entire team to take back with them.

I also used the morning to interview a few more teachers who had been evaluated the day before. This teacher was glad that it was over but suggested that the principal had created a picture of the process as being more serious than what had unfolded as he explains:

Ek het baie meer gedink hierdie mense gaan baie meer vra. Hy het (die hoof) vir ons verskriklik bang gemaak reg in die begin. Toe ons die eerste keer van hierdie ding gehoor het, ons was almal vrek bang en gedink – hier kom paneel inspeksie, en dit was nie so gewees nie. Ons was baie "surprised" gewees toe hierdie ou in die klas instap en hy gaan sit daar agter en hy vra nie eers vir boeke nie. Ek dink hy (die hoof) het dit baie erger gemaak as wat dit was. Hy maak altyd hierdie groot storie van n ding en dan is dit nie so erg nie (Hansie 24/05/2002).

I thought that these people would ask for much more. He (the principal) made us extremely scared at the beginning. When we first heard about this thing, we were all scared and believed – that this was going to be a panel inspection, but this was not the case. We were very surprised when the gentleman walked into the class and sat at the back and did not ask for books first. I think (the principal) made it more serious than it was. He always makes a big story of things and then it is not so serious (English translation).

The specialist reveals the status of the patient's health!

The circuit manager and the school governing body chairperson joined the staff and evaluation team for tea at 10 am that morning. A member of the staff insisted that the evaluation team take a photograph, which she planned on inserting into the local

newspaper. The basic idea was to inform other schools that *Wagpos* had survived the gruelling four days of the WSE!



#33 Photograph: (2002) “WSE Team, monitor and researcher”.

Having completed all the preliminaries the team met with the principal, SMT, circuit inspector and chairperson of the school governing body to deliver the final oral report. The oral report was compiled with inputs from all supervisors but delivered by the team leader. Responses were made with regard to all nine focus areas and team members were given the opportunity to contribute any further inputs if desired.



#34 Photograph: (2002) “Presentation of oral report”.

The principal expressed his views on the process and thanked the team for the professional way in which they had conducted the evaluation. He promised to inform other principals and schools and to convince them that “WSE is a good thing”. The circuit manager also expressed his appreciation to the team and said that *Wagpos* had done them proud since this was the first school to be evaluated in the North West province (except the pilot schools). The meeting closed on a good note leaving everyone in high spirits. Good wishes were exchanged and the evaluation team departed after packing their cars properly with their vegetables from the *Wagpos* farms!

My work at the school was not yet over and I returned to the office to interview the circuit manager with whom I had arranged to meet. After discussions with other teachers in the school I followed the circuit manager to the district office in the town so that I could meet with the district manager. The meeting was very fruitful as I was able to hand in the interview schedule that I was to use as well as explain to the district manager that I required his assistance with regard to identifying officials whom I could interview. He had a prior arrangement and suggested that I call him in a few days so that he would be able to inform me once he had made arrangements for the interviews. Satisfied that he had been very co-operative I left the district office and headed for home.

Section Three

6.3.1 After the external evaluation

Teacher feelings after the evaluation

There were genuine sighs of relief after the process. A general feeling of the process having gone off “well” pervaded the school environment. A sense of renewed pride was instilled in the hearts and minds of many of the teachers, who only a few days before were extremely uneasy and unsure of themselves. The general sentiments of the teachers are reflected aptly in this quotation:

I think she (evaluation team leader) was as we say in Afrikaans “in die kol” (English translation, “on the money”). I think she recognised that we are a great school, and I think she saw a few problems which I agreed with her, but I think in total, she saw through us and she saw that everything was going to plan...(Van Heerden 30/09/2002).

As regards the value of WSE, one teacher reflected that he found it personally worthwhile. He continued by stating that:

I wondered if the inspectors didn't want to learn something. I am not trying to be funny, but I think (that) maybe it was an eye-opener for them because I heard from some of them that they were pleasantly surprised at what they found here (Van Heerden 30/09/2002).

What this reflects is that the teacher is confident that the school could serve as an example of good practice for others to follow and for the evaluators to learn from.

Others were not so confident that the process revealed what really went on in the lives of teachers. Let us consider the following potent quotation on a teacher's impressions of the WSE process:

I think this was an experiment that only scratched the surface and didn't ...I would like if they (supervisors) want to really see what we are doing, they must give one person to me for two days. If he works with me up until night, everything, to know what I do after school and how do I prepare for the next morning, and what do I do with my extramural activities and all those kind of things, because I don't think that they really know what goes on in the teachers' lives (Karel 30/09/2002).

He continued by vocalising his and the frustrations of many other teachers, saying that:

The principal wants more and better and so on. The Department wants more and so on, but they don't give you more (Karel 30/09/2002).

For this teacher and for many others, the WSE process was over – something of the past that seemed to have added to the stress they were already experiencing. The principal's view, however, was that the teachers were much more relaxed and happy after the evaluation.

Practitioner comments on recommendations received

Many teachers cited that the school was described as a “pocket of excellence” in the district and this phrase quickly spread like wild fire through to the other schools in the quiet district of Brits. Some teachers eagerly pointed out that they would be spreading the gospel around that WSE was not about “teacher-bashing and school-bashing”.

Some teachers concluded that there was some good advice given on *certain* matters and that they were pointed to the problem areas. This they claimed would be helpful in “sharpening up their teaching”. There was consensus that the evaluation team did not focus on “OBE matters” as the teachers had expected. To this a teacher remarked, “*maybe they also don’t know what is going on, I am not quite sure*” (Marilene 30/09/2002).

Positive comments

One teacher indicated that the evaluator was “*glad to see that we do group work*”. He indicated that generally teachers are reluctant to engage in group work because “*things can get out of hand if you don’t know what you are doing*” (Karel 30/09/2002).

Another teacher acknowledged that there were shortcomings in as far as the practice of safety precautions in the workshops was concerned. He described the recommendations he received as “*very significant*”. He has discussed this in his subject meeting with others and has decided to embark on a new code of practice in the new year.

Negative comments

The issue of a lack of transformation in the school was raised in the oral report of the school. A member of the management team had this response in defence of the comment:

...the one that I remember she told us is that there are not enough other “colour” people in our school, and we showed her; we asked and we invited and we did a lot of things to get black children into the school, but if the children do not want to work in a pigsty and they don’t want to get involved with the cattle and so on, you can’t make them, and the other coloured children is not that keen to work in that kind of environment. So, she knew that we did everything from our side, but she said this is a problem for us and so Derrick, the other person (member of WSE Team) said we must try is to get another colour teacher in place, to do this job, but with the low turnover of people (teachers) now it is going to be very difficult to do that, especially when the type of vacancies is in the agricultural/technical departments, it is going to be difficult to do that (Karel 30/09/2002).

Certainly dealing with the ills that apartheid had created will need more in-depth, conscious and deliberate targeting of the mind sets of all those involved in education at *Wagpos*: the principal, teachers, parents, and learners as well as the society at large. But the process of

conversion is not a linear one. The process of reform is an iterative one, as one reform initiative acts as a catalyst and snowball for other initiatives (Samuel 1998).

Some of the teachers expressed that the teaching methodologies practised were described as being of the routine question-and-answer approach. They were encouraged to attempt more novel and creative teaching approaches.

Teachers in a particular subject area, who were not using textbooks, were requested to do so. These teachers were not aware of any local textbook that could be used for teaching the subject. It was also recommended that the teachers engage in more practical work as the subject lent itself to a more “hands-on” experience. These teachers felt that the approach suggested was not always practical, as they had to sometimes deal with large numbers of learners in a classroom.

A recommendation to one of the teachers was that he should “do less” and that the learners should “do more”. Obviously, this teacher had no clue as to what the expectation was and this is evidenced in his response:

If the children must work more, I don't always know how because they don't know the subject. How must they know something that they have never worked with? In my class in Field Husbandry, five of them are children from farms; the other 25 are coming from cities. So how do they know anything about it? How do they work more? They don't know what you are talking about (Chart 30/09/2002).

Before the release of the written report

As soon as the oral report was presented a decision was taken to work towards remedying some of the weaknesses that were highlighted, clearly signalling the school's commitment towards improving themselves. Only a week after the evaluation was completed the school embraced a new timetable. A significant change was that the duration of the periods was extended from 35 minutes to 45 minutes – a change welcomed by all.

Handing over of the written report/release of the written report

The official release of the detailed written report, completed about three weeks after the external evaluation, was marked by two functions. The first official hand-over of the final report was celebrated at a function held on the sports ground arranged by the school and the governing body. At this function the team leader provided a summary of what was contained in the report.

A day later, that is, on the last day of the second school term, a second official hand-over of the report took place in the staff room in the presence of the full compliment of the teaching staff, circuit manager and chairperson of the governing body. This exercise, described by teachers as a “tea-drinking session”, was short because many teachers had to literally jump from that meeting to deal with other pressing issues such as the completion of marks for the matriculation portfolios – there was definitely no time for them to recuperate.

Reflections on the prescribed medication

Several teachers expressed concerns that they were overloaded with activities and were afraid that time would not permit them to review the recommendations in the report. This teacher’s concerns aptly capture the general concerns raised:

I think that there was some good advice given probably, you know recommendations made, but I don't think that we have made as much of it as we could have. I must say it is not only from their side, it is also from our side. Because we are so extremely busy, we just don't have time, we didn't even have a staff meeting afterwards so that we can really discuss it. There is just no time. I am worried about the fact that we do not have time for this kind of thing, Whole School, because it feels to me as if we are just rushing everything, we are never doing anything properly and completely. I feel disorientated in school these days, because it seems to me that I can never sit down and do something well. It is this drifting thing, rushing to finish off (Marilene 30/09/2002).

The written report was more detailed than the oral report that was presented⁴⁷. The report does not make exciting reading to outsiders because it is written in a peculiar language, “WSE speak”, described below, and because the evaluators have boiled down a vast amount of observation into brief sentences. For example, the school’s report included the

criticisms that ineffective use is made of the variety of teaching methods that exist (i.e. “n’ Groter verskeidenheid van aanbiedingstrategiee behoort gebruik to word”) and that more attention must be given to preparations for Mathematics (i.e. “Begrip van Wiskunde moet meer aandag kry”). While such comments certainly are based on more specific observations, it is hard to know how schools can respond to such generalisations. There was, however, general consensus that *some* of the recommendations were practical and implementable.

Events/action taken after release of the written report

The strong impression from the teacher data is that even after the evaluation and the arrival of the written report, teacher workload did not decrease. One teacher recounted the experience:

You know, I can remember that it was the Friday that the report was given, it was a happy-go-lucky thing, and the Monday Mr Neethling, I don't know if he got up on the wrong side of the bed, it was the most vicious week. I can't remember what happened, I can just remember thinking that I thought this would be a nice time and it was far from a nice time (Marilene 30/09/2002).

The data also suggests that teacher morale seemed to hang in the balance. A teacher described the prevailing mood at *Wagpos* as follows:

We actually felt that even if the report was so good, it wasn't good enough. It wasn't good enough and once again we all went into overdrive again. I think the exam papers had to be in at the end of the month or something, and then everybody was.... It had to be done like this (hits hands), as quickly as possible (Anna 30/09/2002).

When the written report came, the remarks were worse. The principal let you feel that you aren't good enough. There was not a lot mentioned about the positive outcomes, but he overemphasised on things that could be improved. We were told that we have to get our act together and improve in weak areas in the shortest possible time. That was where he lost me. I became very angry and actually said, "If this wasn't good enough, nothing will ever be so why are we trying anyway?" He will never be pleased or give good remarks or positive remarks on anything that a teacher does. He made people feel more inferior, more discouraged, more doubtful, more inadequate. People asked questions like: What am I doing in the teaching profession? Why must I encounter all these things for such a low salary? (Chart 2002).

⁴⁷ See Department of Education website for full report. Web address www.doe.gov.za

Three months had elapsed and teachers had up to that point not seen the written report. All that they had received was a brief oral summary from the evaluation team leader and the principal. Management staff had also not reviewed the document. In fact, one member of management informed me that they were planning to review the report only when the learners became engaged in examinations as this would create space for the review to take place. He was satisfied with the principal's evaluation that the comments in the oral report were aligned with the comments in the written report.

Since the principal did not meet with many of the management team members, the general feeling was that there were no serious problems in their particular departments. The principal claimed that he did meet with one of the department heads because, according to him, this department had received a negative report. The principal then pursued action as follows:

I knew on which teacher it was applicable and I started with class visits. I demanded the preparation to be handed in each and every week and I did the whole thing, and what the outcome of this whole issue is that the teacher has reached retirement and he is going to leave at the end of the year.... We took immediate action and you see we worked on it, so I am satisfied (Principal 30/09/2002).

At this point I would like to make one observation. Simply put, what happened here was in complete contradiction to the policy. Instead of the process leading to developmental action for the teacher, this teacher now had to face the frustration of handing in weekly preparations and being inundated with class visits from the principal. Obviously, after facing heightened levels of frustration, this teacher, who is close to retirement, informed the principal that he was going to leave the teaching profession at the end of the year.

Further follow-up by the principal was in the form of a letter to the department requesting financial assistance to upgrade the school buildings, which, the evaluation report indicated, were in serious need of attention. This was to no avail as the response was that the school (being a former model C school) should make their own internal arrangements to maintain the school buildings. The school governing body's reaction to the recommendations was that immediate attention be devoted to the school infrastructure. Finances were then dedicated for the painting and replacing of sections of the school roof, replacing of broken

tiles, painting of classrooms and the redecorating of the school entrance wall. The school sought financial assistance from the department mainly for major repairs to the building.

The general consensus was that the district officials did not visit the school to lend support for the school development-planning phase. The school had decided that they would engage in this process during the examination period. By mid-November 2002, no planning on paper had commenced.

Practitioner views on the value of the process

Views varied markedly, some describing the experiences as useful and enlightening, whilst others emphatically stated that they did not gain anything except increased stress levels.

It's as if every year the teaching gets worse and after the Whole School Evaluation, it's just a little step in the whole year of stress. It wasn't, it didn't change anything in our workload. It probably made it worse because now the Subject Advisors had also stepped up their demands, you know and now that the matric CASS (continuous assessment) marks are finished, now the Grade 9 evaluations are coming, and because we are a marking centre, it has made our year extremely short (Anna 30/09/2002).

Another teacher also describes that the process has not enriched her teaching life nor has it been of any advantage to her:

If I look back at my teaching career, we used to get the old inspectors, and they came, they would spend two, three days and then they would get the English teachers together and they would say, "The method you do in Poetry is not good, rather try this, the method you are doing in Creative Writing ...", I felt they hopped in my class, they hopped out and I have learned nothing. I have got no personal recommendation that I can improve on or learn from or anything (Marilene 30/09/2002).

One teacher highlighted the fact that recommendations are not useful if these are not made in the presence of the subject advisor.

I am not sure it is worth all that energy, especially when you do a recommendation, for instance for your subjects and your Subject Advisor is not there, there is no sense in it. Now they (the evaluation team) give recommendations, and you talk to your Subject Advisor and he has something different, how do you bring it together?

So your Subject Advisor must be there when they do the recommendations, he must know about it (Chart 30/09/2002).

Also, according to him, many of the recommendations come with huge financial implications and since the department is not forthcoming with the finances these recommendations are dispelled as being meaningless.

Confessions from the district

I present the reflections of district officials on the post-evaluation process. Their personal and professional reflections provide interesting and valuable insights into the problem of policy implementation. I draw on the concrete experiences of these officials revealed through the interviews and conversations I had with them. Whilst my intention is to add to the body of knowledge on policy implementation, I also try to shed some light on how the social, political and historical context influences and shapes the unfolding of the WSE policy. Interviews were conducted with three senior officials in order to understand the events after the external evaluation.

There are so many schools with 500 percent bigger problems that are not addressed! – district official

Six months had passed since the external evaluation. My visits to the school revealed that the district had still not visited the school to discuss school development planning. Repeated calls to the circuit manager for an interview were unsuccessful. I was more successful with securing interviews with the district manager and deputy district manager who later paved the way for interaction with the circuit manager.

Of the three officials, two had not seen the report and were not familiar with the contents. The third official was part of the process when the report was officially handed over to the school and had a “basic” idea of its contents. The officials vacillated in affording reasons why there had not been any follow up on the WSE at *Wagpos*. Described below are several diverse reasons.

Firstly, the subject advisory unit did not service the Brits district only, but included Garunkuwa and Themba district, making it virtually impossible for them to cope with the large number of schools and the limited personpower. There was a need, according to all three officials, for more subject advisors, auxiliary services and education support personnel. This signalled a complete contradiction to what the district manager stated in his first interview when he confidently expressed that there was sufficient personpower to deal with WSE.

Secondly, the communication between various groups was cited as being very poor. One official claimed that he had handed over the report to a subject advisor who would then be expected to visit the school but could not give an indication of when this was due to happen. He simply stated that in order for him to oversee all facets of education, he needed more support from the support services.

Another official explained the seriousness of the problem of communication that existed:

When they (subject advisors) zoom into schools, they never go via the circuit representative. We are now in your circuit, take us along. So what happens they are always ahead, not that we blame them for being there, they are always in the schools and the circuit manager comes at a later stage, if ever he does come and more often he doesn't (DDM 06/11/2002).

Thirdly, according to the circuit manager, the school had decided to extend the curriculum from an overall agricultural school to an academic school and they were busy re-writing their policies. His response to the school was:

...do that groundwork and we will come in when you are finished with that and we will assist and support to finalise and to round off the policy (CM 06/11/2002).

Fourthly, it was not a serious issue that the school had not been assisted with school development planning according to this official:

I personally think that the report they received was excellent, excellent, and may I say there are many schools with 500 percent bigger problems that are not addressed (CM 06/11/2002).

He had simply taken for granted that the school possessed unfettered competencies to draw up their own school development plan, and expected them to go ahead with it so that he could do a follow up in the new year.

Fifthly, since the process had not been followed closely since the inception, the subsequent follow up was also not given priority. This was the sentiment of one official:

...in our meetings we have never had time to focus on this. I think it is something that has been shelved (DDM 06/11/2002).

Sixthly, in the absence of a clear allocation of roles, individuals were reluctant to accept responsibilities. A lot of man hours are spent by senior officials writing letters to other officials in order to clarify roles and responsibilities resulting in unnecessary delays with regard to delivery.

Seventhly, the non-response was due to the fact that the problem between unions and the department over the implementation of WSE was still being resolved.

Eighthly, the attempt by the DoE to decentralise service delivery created a lot of tension, frustration and uncertainty among those employed in the district. The process, which was started in 1999, appears to have dragged on with rumours and speculations emanating at different intervals. Fears among employees were mainly over the loss of jobs and the possibility of relocation. The restructuring agenda gained momentum in August 2002 – this was marked by the appointment of regional managers as well as a public announcement of the merging of three districts, that is, Brits, Mabopane and Themba. The process is expected to be completed by June 2003.

All stories must have an ending – some happy and some sad. Certainly the story of *Wagpos* hasn't ended yet. As the curtains close on a very eventful yet hectic 2002, lurking in the horizons is a fresh, hopeful 2003 waiting to be embraced and discovered. There are also important messages, especially for the school, circuit and district. The issue of school development plans needs to emerge with some ferocity as this is the vital next step in the process of policy implementation. Despite the substantive lag period from the external evaluations until now (December, 2002), there is still a possibility that stakeholders could

engage in powerful, visionary and exciting school development plans for the school so that the *Wagpos* community could continue in their fervent pursuit of achieving visible positive change.

6.4 What have we learnt about WSE policy implementation at *Wagpos*?

A number of salient points were foregrounded during the WSE policy implementation at *Wagpos*. A general sense of uncertainty about expectations prevailed (see sections 6.1.1 and 6.2.1). Teachers had their own ideas about what to expect of the process – based mainly on experiences of past inspections. Their conceptions were also influenced largely by what they were told by the principal who, in his assertive leadership style, was responsible for overseeing the process (see Chapter 7, propositions 4, 5 and 6).

WSE progressed “smoothly” through the self-evaluation and external evaluation phases. School development planning, which was expected to “get off the ground” at least four weeks after the receipt of the written report (as stipulated in the policy), did however not materialise. Depicted graphically (figure 6.1.) is a progress gradient for WSE policy implementation.

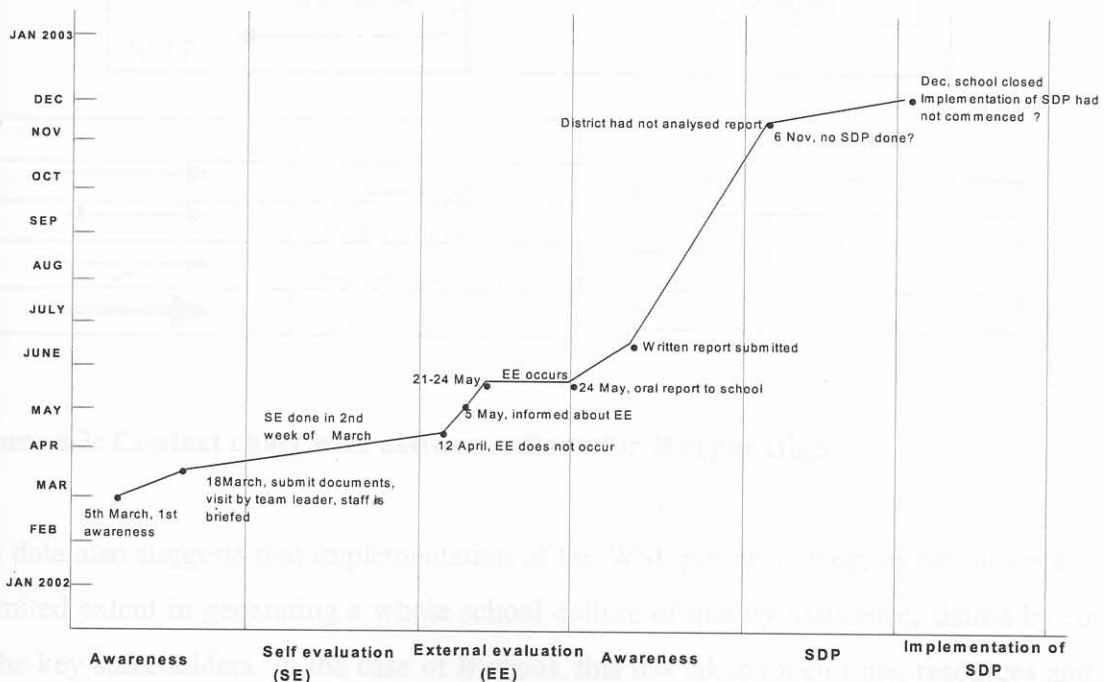


Figure 6.1: Progress gradient for WSE policy implementation

A partnership approach, transparent and negotiable, was adopted by the principal and the evaluation team at the outset of the project. More importantly, consultation and discussion with stakeholders (district, circuit, governing body, parents, learners) were maintained in some cases – to a lesser degree in others – whilst in most instances this did not occur at all. Also, varying degrees of support were elicited and received during the WSE policy implementation process at *Wagpos*. This is captured in a context chart with assistance flows (depicted in figure 6.2.) indicating where assistance comes from and who receives it.

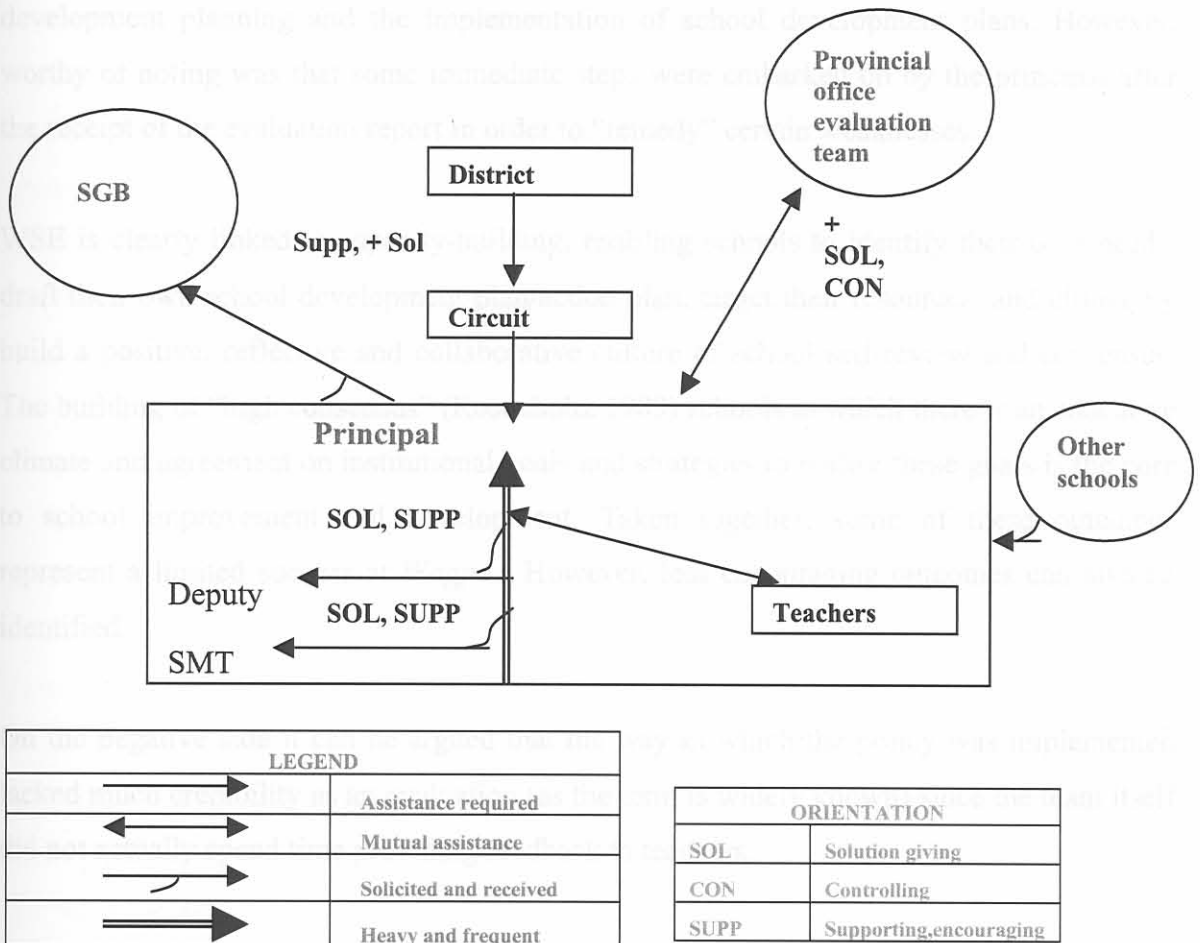


Figure 6.2: Context chart with assistance flows for *Wagpos High*

The data also suggests that implementation of the WSE policy at *Wagpos* has succeeded to a limited extent in generating a whole school culture of quality assurance, shared by some of the key stakeholders. In the case of *Wagpos*, this has taken much time, resources and an enormous investment of human commitment and goodwill. This understandably has served to bolster goodwill among members of the external evaluation team, the management and

teachers at *Wagpos* but also raises major questions as to whether such an intensive and time-consuming initiative could in reality be spread across the entire school system.

Another positive outcome is the sense in which an interlinked process of general evaluation has gained a foothold at *Wagpos*. It would seem to me that a more strategic, “enlightened eye” view of external evaluation is now in place at the school. The school was, however, not supported and “scaffolded” following the evaluation, delaying the process of school development planning and the implementation of school development plans. However, worthy of noting was that some immediate steps were embarked on by the principal after the receipt of the evaluation report in order to “remedy” certain weaknesses.

WSE is clearly linked to capacity-building, enabling schools to identify their own needs, draft their own school development plan/action plan, target their resources, and ultimately build a positive, reflective and collaborative culture of school self-review and consensus. The building of “high consensus” (Rosenholtz 1989) schools in which there is an educative climate and agreement on institutional goals and strategies to realise these goals is the core to school improvement and development. Taken together, some of these outcomes represent a limited success at *Wagpos*. However, less encouraging outcomes can also be identified.

On the negative side it can be argued that the way in which the policy was implemented lacked much credibility as an evaluation (as the term is widely known) since the team itself did not actually spend time providing feedback to teachers.

There is no doubt that the external evaluators tried to make the teachers comfortable and in doing so the concerns of other stakeholders were downplayed. For example, the concentration with whole school rather than individual teacher performance does place question marks over the future direction and credibility of WSE. Unhappiness with the “softly-softly” approach adopted is clear from the data at the case study school. The principal and external supervisors now pointedly note that the way in which the policy is implemented allows for a detailed evaluation of school management planning etc, but not for the evaluation of individual teachers. For this reason it is felt that the process is largely an evaluation of management and that most critically, even where teacher weaknesses are identified, the existing situation in which it is possible to do next to nothing about them

remains unchallenged. It is apparent that WSE can make recommendations but in itself will not cure weaknesses in any school. Similar frustrations were echoed by others involved.

Sensitivities to be respected in the writing of the reports (which acquire the status of a legal document) involved the external evaluators in a workload that was sometimes untenable – reports invariably tended towards superficiality, that is, carefully couched in language that gave details of the school in very general terms.

A further issue arising from the implementation of the school self-evaluation concerns the commitment to the promotion of a democratic, inclusive approach to evaluation at school level. The views of pupils, as primary consumers of the teaching-learning process, were not sought during the self-evaluation phase. A token gesture of involvement was offered to the parent body (parent representatives on the school's governing body met with the external evaluators) during the external evaluation only. What is worth fighting for in quality assurance? In a transformative and democratic country such as South Africa would purport to be, a widely held view is that schools must be enabled to speak for themselves in pursuit of increased effectiveness and development. Accordingly, the data indicates that negotiating the role of the various stakeholders in WSE was a thorny issue.

Despite these reservations it must also be noted that the data indicate that teacher response to the WSE implementation process varied with very few being overwhelmingly positive (still this is in stark contrast to the hostility to inspection that has characterised previous debate) and others being clear that they did not really gain anything from the experience. Moreover, it also emerged that whilst some teachers found the recommendations useful others felt that implementation of the recommendations would be impossible to achieve.

A final positive and indeed remarkable outcome was that teachers agreed to be evaluated at all and moreover some were then positive in their evaluations of the process.

6.5 Chapter summary

Throughout this chapter I have recounted the *events* in the unfolding of the WSE policy implementation at *Wagpos* High: what they are, when they happened and what their connections to other events are (or were) so as to preserve the chronology and illuminate

the processes occurring (a process, after all, is essentially a string of coherently related events). Furthermore, this chapter has captured through the conversations, documents, photographs and diaries, the complexity of policy implementation even in a context where there is a readiness to receive and implement policy. The “confessions” that arose out of the conversations and diaries are tapestries woven from moments of critical reflection, sometimes exposing moments of uncertainty.

The narrative foregrounds the relationship between the different role-players, the influence of politics on the implementation trajectory of WSE, the response of the school and structures in government to these influences, and the dynamics involved in physically managing the WSE process, particularly gazing into how *Wagpos* High negotiates the difficult terrain.

The homogenous culture prevailing at *Wagpos* has contributed significantly towards creating a positive attitude at the school (see Chapter 7, proposition 6). Despite the fact that teachers were unaware of all the expectations of the WSE policy, they continued to embrace it positively with the hope of realising positive change.

Wagpos displayed through its actions a deep sense of commitment to the “call of bureaucracy” by defying all requests, that is, from teacher unions, neighbouring schools etc not to forge ahead with the implementation of the WSE policy. Evidence indicates that *Wagpos* is driven by an exceptionally high level of bureaucratic responsiveness – they even abandoned their teacher appraisal process to respond to the request to implement WSE policy. This almost “blind” compliance with authority seems to exist within the school – teachers are responsive to the SMT who are in turn responsive to the principal. The principal is responsive to the Department – a chain-like reaction not expected to be uncoupled!

Perhaps I have reached an even more fundamental conclusion about planned change based on the *Wagpos* study. Widely heralded promising ideas in education have continued to be proposed during the strong wave of reform in the country only to end up, as did the WSE policy at *Wagpos*, in the box labelled “attempted or incomplete implementation”. *Wagpos* demonstrated that incomplete implementation occurs when the coalescing and maintenance

of many broadly-conceived *desiderata are missing*.⁴⁸ Clarity of stakeholder understanding is just one of the desiderata.

Role change requires the implementers to have a concise understanding of the new goals and role expectations, implementer ability to enact the new role expectations; the necessary resources; considerable time; coordination; support and encouragement. What it requires is a deliberate process of role socialisation. Only a few of these were addressed in the post-initiation strategy of the principal and external evaluators. The district and circuit played virtually no role in addressing this. Simply presenting the WSE policy and giving committed implementers the freedom to carry it out will not suffice – as has been shown by the *Wagpos* study.

In the narrative presented, there are many issues upon which I could focus. Choosing those that seem to be of most interest to the study, have most heuristic value, and that can be extrapolated from the data at hand to shed light on new insights for policy implementation in countries such as South Africa, undergoing transformation is the challenge that I engage in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ Reference made to desiderata in the Cambire High School study by Giacuinta, J, in Hargreaves et al, 1998.

Chapter Seven

Theorising Educational Change in Transforming Contexts

7.1 Introduction

When I started this dissertation my goal was to document how stakeholders understood and implemented Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy in a school context occupied by other competing evaluation policies. I had consciously decided to cancel out the effects of resistance to policy implementation, therefore I selected a school that embraced and was eager to implement the government's WSE policy. My original intention was to produce a framework for policy implementation in contexts where competing policies jostle for attention.

In the course of my research it became apparent that the original plan was not going to be as simple and straightforward as I had anticipated. As I immersed myself in the data analysis, I realised that the series of policy implementation events at *Wagpos* had to be juxtaposed against complex and broader contextual issues. What I also learnt in the course of doing this research was unsettling: change is deeply complex and highly unpredictable even in settings where there appears to be a receptiveness to mandated reforms. But that was only the beginning.

During this long journey of "research learning", I discovered that several change theorists have launched new theoretical inventions on the policy-practice relationship in general (Sutton & Levinson 2002) and in the specific context of transition states (Jansen 2000, 2002). Having gained these insights I now believe that the rush towards solutions (my original intention to produce a framework for policy implementation) is often unproductive because of the lack of understanding of the complex factors that influence and undermine policy change in the first place. What I seek to provide is deeper insights into policy change in receptive contexts where competing policies reside.

There are two observations about this case study – implementation at *Wagpos* High *did* occur (though incomplete) but not as planned despite the fact that there was a readiness to

implement the policy in the school. The first question then is: Why did the policy get implemented despite the serious controversy surrounding the policy?

There was strong resistance from the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), the largest teacher union in the country to stall implementation, and the teaching force responded positively by barring supervisors from entering their schools. *Wagpos* was, in fact, the only school in the province that obliged and forged ahead with self-evaluation in March 2002. Here I could offer two reasons for why this happened. The first reason is that many teachers at the school did not belong to SADTU but were instead members of the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyserunie⁴⁹ (SAOU) and hence did not heed the call from SADTU (the general picture of SAOU is one of vigilant union neutrality). The second is that this could be explained by looking at the culture that prevails at *Wagpos* – a culture of strong compliance with authority (see Chapter 4). A culture where there is a strong institutional aversion to conflict. *Wagpos* staff willingly forged ahead without challenging or questioning higher authority. These less powerful actors – learners and their parents, teachers, school governing body and principal – adjusted their actions and expectations to a *fait accompli*.

Yet the other is a puzzling observation that requires explanation in the case study on policy implementation at *Wagpos*. A commonly held view is that if a decision is made in a system to carry out an innovation, then the innovation *ipso facto* would be enacted. Why then did the policy *not* get implemented as planned despite the fact that individuals were willing to implement it? The implementation process unfolded in different ways from those intended by policy. The way in which the policy was implemented depended largely on multiple stakeholders, many of whom were mobilised by government to facilitate the implementation. The trajectory of the WSE policy (which was different from planned expectations) requires an explanation given the readiness to receive and manage change at *Wagpos*.

These observations offer potentially new insights on the subject of policy implementation in schools grappling with transformation.

⁴⁹ This is the teacher union that most white teachers in the apartheid era subscribed to.

7.2 Understanding policy change: insights from *Wagpos High*

In this section I revisit the propositions and provide evidence to validate, refute or extend them in light of the case study data.

Proposition 1

Implementation of competing evaluation policies will be afforded varying degrees of attention depending on the implementers' determination of the immediacy, practicality and knowledge of each policy.

Wagpos High was engaged with implementing DAS when they first heard about having to implement WSE. Owing to logistical problems the school had temporarily ceased with DAS implementation. The problem faced related to the difficulty of constituting a panel for teacher appraisals given the fact that classes would be left unattended if teachers were involved in peer appraisals. If DAS implementation was to be continued then this called for immediate re-orientation of the school timetable so as to ensure that teachers constituting the peer appraisal panels would be available at the same time. Re-orientation of the timetable was seen as a mammoth task – not possible at that time.

In the interim period the principal continued with what he viewed as practical, that is, his own format of teacher appraisal until *Wagpos* was informed of the date for WSE. The principal's gesture to continue with his own style of appraisal can be interpreted in two ways. First, that teacher appraisal is seen as an important and valuable component, which is aimed at improvement in the life of the school. Second, that the school did not want to be seen as being overtly defiant of the department's policy and hence replaced the DAS policy with their own type of appraisal system.

A dilemma that the school had to deal with when the WSE policy was announced was which policy should take precedence at the time. Should *Wagpos* continue with teacher appraisal or WSE policy? Evidence indicates that WSE became the important policy for the moment and took precedence over all else. This is captured subtly by an abstract taken from a teacher's diary:

...The principal's control system had also stopped before external evaluation. I did not have to send my files in every week to the HOD. Suddenly the principal and HODs also stopped walking into my classroom to see if the classroom was neat, and clean and that my files were on my desk (Chaart 2002).

Evidently, the principal was instrumental in determining what was immediate and such a decision was sanctioned by his loyal SMT. Teachers were, however, excluded from “high level” decision making and were informed of decisions at staff meetings. Initially the decision to implement WSE was not graciously accepted, as is reflected by this quotation, but with time teachers resigned themselves to their fate.

There was a negative reaction amongst teachers when WSE was first announced. They asked a lot of questions to the principal but no answers were given... Teachers were very angry and blamed the principal because they actually thought it was his idea and that he invited the WSE team (Chaart 2002).

Evidence indicates that practical conditions continued to dictate implementation decisions. Partly due to the time constraints the principal, did not conduct self-evaluation as required by the policy. He expressed the following sentiments for the stance taken:

It is the basic right of each child to be educated and if I take that privilege or basic right away from children, I am the problem. ...I don't intend to interrupt a school programme and take away the basic right of the children if I am not convinced that that is in favour of the child and I was not convinced that this WSE was of such importance so as to interrupt a whole school programme (Principal 15/05/2002).

Furthermore, the timing for implementation also interfered with planning for examinations; hence teachers indicated that they could not do more in preparation for the WSE. The transition to school development planning could also not be made partly due to time constraints – the school was in the wake of the matriculation examinations and had also been declared a marking centre⁵⁰ hence organisational arrangements needed to be effected.

As regards implementers' knowledge of the policies – the principal's and teachers' understanding of the WSE policy, as has already been shown, differed greatly from each other, other stakeholders and from a literal analysis of the policies (see Chapter 5; also proposition 3). The data indicates that some teachers were unaware of the DAS policy even

⁵⁰ Specific schools are identified at centres for the marking of matriculation examination papers. Examiners selected from around the country converge at the site to mark and finalise matriculation results.

though it was being implemented at the school. Others were unaware of the mechanics of the WSE policy, that is, self-evaluation was to be conducted by the school prior to external evaluation. Teachers at *Wagpos* were also totally oblivious of the self-evaluation having occurred at the school as this was an activity confined to the principal and SMT. This is reflected by a teacher's comments:

No self-evaluation took place. The headmaster did visit some teachers in March and that does always cause tension in the staff room, as we never know, who is next on his list. No report of any teacher was mentioned or discussed (Marilene 22/04/2002).

Apart from opting to do what he felt was practical and immediate, the principal pursued activities that were known to him, for example, preparation of documents as stipulated in the letter that he received from the evaluation team leader. In instances where he was unaware of requirements, for example, the need to elect a co-ordinator whose role it would have been to serve as liaison between the school and the evaluation team, he simply did what he found practical and acceptable to his standards. In this case the principal served the role as evaluation co-ordinator – which is contradictory to policy expectations. Teachers were no different – they prepared themselves according to what they had known and experienced in the past (see proposition 4).

Basically, the principal took the lead in juggling with this continually evolving profile of policies imposed from the outside, through implementation (or temporary abandonment as in the case of DAS?) alongside other changes and the rest of ongoing work. Interestingly, even after the WSE, the principal did not continue with his routine class inspections and DAS implementation was not revived at *Wagpos*.

There is overwhelming evidence validating the proposition that the implementation stance of the school practitioners was determined by what was considered immediate, practical and known in the case where competing policies reside. On close scrutiny of the proposition I argue that what was known by the practitioners did not always coincide with policy expectations as has been shown.

Proposition 2

Policies only have desired impacts if there is a high degree of “coherence” among different policies

The data shows that there is no “joined up thinking” between the policies, that is, WSE; DAS and SE. Each policy has been treated as a separate entity (two policies were developed by the Quality Assurance Directorate and one by the Teacher Development Directorate). Close interrogation of the policies indicates that there is evidence of commonalities and differences between the policies but attention is not drawn to these aspects in the individual policy texts. As a result of this, officials saw the policies as “quite separate entities” (Lebo 22/05/2002). This viewpoint is succinctly captured in the following two quotations:

No, I don't think it is quite the same thing. This thing you were talking about (DAS) this is on the individual. What we are going through now, its on the whole school, so it's different. I see it as two different things (Sartie 24/05/2002).

Our teachers find it very difficult to buy the idea that there are three instruments on the table. Many ask why three instruments, what is the difference? And the difference and the aims are not clear to them (CM 24/05/2002).

How then are stakeholders expected to implement these policies simultaneously in the school context if they lack coherence with similar policies?

The data also show that the problem does not only rest with a lack of coherence with similar policies but also with incoherence within the policy frameworks. There were several tensions in the overall coherence of each of the policies analysed. In the WSE policy, one of the tensions is between school autonomy and state control. It appears that schools are being granted greater autonomy to conduct self-evaluation and decide on their progress and plans for school improvement but are excluded from external evaluation. Even in cases where they have a complaint about “unfair treatment or unjustified action” the Minister of Education will be the final arbiter in any complaint. Another glaring tension is between development and accountability. Schools will receive district support and development assistance (including financial gain) to implement their improvement plans but tensions arise if these schools do not attain the levels of performance expected. Would schools that

do not achieve the expected levels of performance then be exposed to public blacklisting as was the case previously?

There are gaps with regard to who will ensure that schools have effective well-developed internal self-evaluation processes before external evaluations are allowed and what measures would be put in place to monitor quality control so that quality is the same across provinces and districts. Other gaps relate to who evaluates the support given by the districts to the schools? The roles and responsibilities identified in the WSE policy for district support teams are also contradictory. The DAS policy is also based on several assumptions about the abilities of teachers. Some of these are that teachers are able to engage in reflective practice and thereafter conduct self-appraisal; that peers are “informed and capable” and that the process will be done in a “fair and transparent manner”; that the criteria are understood and applied uniformly and that the members of the panels will work collectively to assist the appraisee to identify needs, formulate objectives, select professional development activities etc.

There is a silence in the WSE policy with regard to how the supervisory units are to be capacitated. Furthermore, there is no clarity as to whether the full-time team of evaluators would be permanently employed personnel in the department of education or consultants contracted full-time for the purpose. The DAS policy, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that the support services of the department are functional enough to provide assistance and the policy may be seen to be overly optimistic by stating that the staff development team will initiate and monitor appraisals in terms of the management plan. Again the assumption here is that each institution will elect a staff development team.

A further confusion arises in the WSE policy when mention is made of training and modular courses for both supervisors and district-based support teams and the subsequent registering of these individuals on the database once they have received training. District officials are not involved in the self-evaluation or the external evaluation at all – why then have them competent to perform evaluations but restrict them from playing the role of evaluators?

Whilst both the WSE and DAS policies outline a theory of action, the Assessment Policy for Grade R to 9, in which SE is mentioned, is completely silent on the implementation

process. A supporting implementation action plan is currently being developed by the National Ministry.

The WSE policy statements are vague and superficial. For example, they state that district support teams must render services to supervisory units but do not spell out the exact nature of such services. The WSE policy is further riddled with terms that are used inconsistently. All these gaps, glaring ambiguities, contradictions, inconsistencies, vague and superficial statements reflect that there is limited coherence within the WSE policy framework as it exists.

Is a high degree of “coherence” among different policies and within policy frameworks adequate for policies to have the desired impacts? The evidence indicates that these alone will not guarantee the desired policy impact. The data foregrounds another important related aspect for careful consideration when dealing with the implementation of multiple policies. What has emerged is that there is also a need for a combined and well-coordinated approach to policy implementation. The present fragmented approach of implementing the individual evaluation policies is unmanageable, as schools do not have the capacity to do this properly.

The school that tries to employ all three (evaluation policies) is going to work themselves to death trying to do them by deadlines and then they (the school staff) will question the spirit in which they are being used and this is usually under stress. So I don't think they can be implemented. Today we're being developmentally appraised and when you've barely recovered from this ...we now have WSE and while you still reeling under this shock you get some kind of systemic evaluation where you have to fill in questionnaires...This is all time-consuming (NAPTOSA official 29/03/2002).

The data indicates that teachers were “suffocating” with all these engagements and that new policies should be “woven into experiences” at the school (DDM 29/05/2002). An approach to be adopted in coping with the diverse evaluation policies is suggested in this district official's remark:

...these three systems should be combined and yes one can have your overall focus like WSE, but I would say that the evaluation of a teacher individually should form part of WSE and with that we would need to get all the subject advisors involved. Why can the teachers within their subjects not be evaluated at the very same time and make this report a comprehensive report (CM 24/05/2002).

Another official also hinted at the need for coherent management across all the policies.

...that there has to be some coherent management across all the evaluation policies that will aim to bring them together so as to obtain a holistic picture. Therefore we propose that there be one policy, that is, quality management policy that begins from the teacher in the context of the school and context of the district (NAPTOSA official 29/03/2002).

Although this proposition is valid as stated, the data has provided further strong support for the need to have a high degree of coherence within each policy framework as well as a combined and well-coordinated approach to policy implementation if policies are to have the desired impacts.

Proposition 3

Policies only have desired impacts if there is a high degree of “coherence” within the minds/understanding of practitioners.

There were marked differences in the understanding of the WSE policy among stakeholders in the same category and across different categories of stakeholders as reflected by the data (see Chapter 5). Why is it then that there was such a low degree of coherence within the minds/understanding of practitioners?

The study finds that there is a lack of coherence in the WSE framework and across the policies (already described in proposition 2). Second, there was minimal involvement of stakeholders from the different levels in the policy development process. Only one national official was directly involved in the development of the WSE policy because the other officials had been recruited after the promulgation of the policy. Provincial officials were not involved in the policy development; the only exception was the provincial co-ordinator. Whilst there remains a debate as to whether there was sufficient union participation in the process, one thing is for certain and that is: classroom teachers were left out of the process completely.

Third, the policies were developed in silos – each directorate taking care of their “own affairs”. Complaints of individuals working in isolation as well as the existence of serious flaws in the communication channels are candidly acknowledged by this official:

...my problem has always been that you never see to the finish of these things, as if Department Directorates are now working in silos. One is not aware of the other, the bottom line is that the same people on the ground are the people who must carry these policies forward (DDM 29/05/2002).

Fourth, the quality, duration and nature of training varied for individuals at the different levels. Evaluators received prolonged and intensive training whilst district officials received minimal training, that is, two days training on the WSE policy. According to the district manager the approach adopted was also not very beneficial.

...we are being trained in piece meals, that is, the subject advisor will be taken alone to be trained, and then the auxiliary services will be taken alone to be trained and when they meet we have got different views about our training, and when implementing this is why we differ in implementing (DM 03/06/2002).

Furthermore, training appeared to have fizzled out by the time it hit the school level – only the principal received training at *Wagpos*. He had attended a one-and-a-half day workshop which was also attended by 50 other principals of the Brits district. SMTs were not taken on board with the training (DM 03/06/2002).

Fifth, the intensity of advocacy varied in the provinces especially at the initial unveiling of the policy when advocacy was on the agenda of the National Ministry of Education. With time this responsibility was conferred to provinces. Attempts by the individual provinces to educate the masses varied with some being more rigorous and dedicated to the cause than others.

Sixth, stakeholder understandings of policies were also influenced by the number of policies they were expected to implement (see proposition 2). Often the policy overload resulted in confusion in the minds of implementers as is reflected by this provincial official's remark:

That's a big problem. There is confusion. DAS itself takes a lot of time and then even when we say they can run parallel, it's going to be a lot of paperwork. I don't know how they are going to cope. There has always been a complaint of exactly what is expected to be done (Lebo 22/05/2002).

Seventh, the understanding of the stakeholders also depended on how, by whom and in what way the information was communicated to them (see proposition 5).

Owing to differences in understanding of the various stakeholders the policy was implemented in a way that varied to some extent from the original vision. Adaptation of the policy occurred especially during the school self-evaluation phase. Other factors over and above stakeholder understandings influenced the outcome of policy implementation (see proposition 7). There was thus a lack of a high degree of “coherence” within the minds/understanding of practitioners and therefore the original proposition cannot be supported.

Proposition 4

When stakeholders have negative experiences of a particular policy issue (i.e. evaluation) they remain sceptical about the value of other similar accountability/evaluation policies no matter how noble the intentions of these policies might be.

Stakeholders brought with them “baggage from the past” and drew heavily on these past experiences. To recapitulate, the majority of teachers at *Wagpos* are experienced teachers (over 10 years of teaching experience) who have been through several inspections in the past. Many recounted vividly the negative experiences of inspections and the profound influence this had on their understanding of the new WSE policy.

What this amounted to was that teachers, in the absence of a hard copy of the policy, rigorous training or workshop presentations on the policy, relied on their past experiences to guide them with their preparations for WSE implementation. Although *Wagpos* has effective subject committees, which meet regularly, the WSE policy content was also not discussed at any of these meetings. Simply put, the teachers at *Wagpos* resorted to basing their expectations of WSE on their past experiences of inspections and thus ultimately prepared themselves accordingly. Inspections of the past were characterised by a hive of activity – key to this was the idea of “window dressing” so as to impress the inspectors. The following excerpt from a teacher’s diary confirms that teachers resorted to similar kinds of activities:

Files were changed even if there was nothing wrong with them. Files were checked by the HOD. Changes were made and more preparations were done than before. I had to write each lesson out – I do not normally do this. I gave homework, and also wrote down the answers to the homework. We were also asked by the principal to write everything down on transparencies. If one looked at my preparations on paper

and the preparations on transparencies, it was exactly the same. The principal did not understand that it was the same and so I had to repeat the work. I got the feeling that nothing was good enough. I use my blackboard a lot and suddenly I have to do everything on transparencies. The weekly planning forms were suddenly changed as well as the preparation forms. The way that I marked my books, wasn't good enough and that had to change as well at the request of my superior (Chaat 2002).

Although the evaluation team leader and the principal had briefed staff, many continued to view WSE as inspections as reflected by the following quotations:

Sort of an inspection but not that you have to fear the inspection (Sartie 24/05/2002).

WSE is an inspection of everything that's going on in school, that is, files, preparations etc (Focus group 1 16/05/2002).

Data obtained from the questionnaire administered to *Wagpos* staff provides further evidence that attitudes and perceptions about WSE being similar to inspections persist. A total of 44,1 percent of the respondents to the item agreed that WSE is the same as inspection while 48,1 percent disagreed. A total of 7,4 percent of the individuals registered that they were unsure. The overwhelmingly strong negative *experiential forces* of inspection continued to dominate teacher thinking about implementation and the inherent value of WSE.

The data provides evidence that some bureaucrats did not want to be associated with the WSE policy as they viewed it as being similar to inspections of the past. This was cited as a factor that seriously hindered implementation in certain provinces. A national official drew on his own past experiences of inspections in an attempt to explain why teachers remain sceptical about WSE:

You were kind of nervous when they came because you knew after the visit that they were going to sit with the principal and discuss your shortcomings, thereafter the subsequent report wouldn't always reflect well on you. That's one fear that teachers have – that this may become an inspection (Petrus 18/03/2002).

The study also finds that previous negative experiences with DAS have left many teachers despondent and somewhat sceptical about whether any good will now emerge from the WSE experience. This is reflected in the following remarks:

We chose some colleagues to evaluate us (and) we filled in some forms. We did it but there it stops. There was no feedback, we never heard anything really (Sartie 24/05/2002).

...the Department has failed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of DAS – that is what is making this new policy WSE to be rejected at school level (John 22/05/2002).

...educators on the ground seem to have lost hope in the Department of Education. Many policies are coming and being implemented but at the end of it all they (the policies) die a sudden death (John 22/05/2002).

On a final note, there was outright dismissal of the WSE policy by SADTU as being no different from the inspections of the apartheid era. I argue that SADTU, by adopting this stance, created confusion among already sceptical teachers making them believe, more than ever, that WSE was no different from the inspections of the apartheid era. In doing so, SADTU was able to mobilise the teaching force with relative ease and stall implementation countrywide.

This proposition is therefore validated by the extensive experiential accounts of stakeholders. Whilst the proposition is validated it may also be extended to reflect that stakeholders draw on their experiences to guide them in their preparations for implementation of similar evaluation policies.

Proposition 5

The school-site conceptions of evaluation are constantly built and changed as a result of human interactions around the work of teaching and learning and running an organisation.

When the mandated WSE policy hit the school, it was constantly negotiated and reorganised in the ongoing flow of institutional life at *Wagpos*. The data indicates that strong forces of influence impacted on school-site conceptions of the policy.

The principal is a strong, visible and respected leader in the school and was the key creator of conceptions of WSE in the school. He strategically conveyed his own understanding (severely limited) to teachers at regular meetings. He conveyed mixed signals (knowingly or unknowingly) to the teaching staff leaving them highly confused. For example, he asked

all teachers to use novel ways in presenting their lessons but later asked them to prepare all their lessons on transparencies and use the overhead projector.

The following quotation reflects that the principal had created false impressions and expectations of the WSE process in the minds of teachers.

Ek het baie meer gedink hierdie mense gaan baie meer vra. Hy (die hoof) het vir ons verskriklik bang gemaak reg in die begin. Toe ons die eerste keer van hierdie ding gehoor het, ons was almal vrek bang en gedink – hier kom paneel inspeksie, en dit was nie so gewees nie. Ons was baie “surprised” gewees toe hierdie ou in die klas instap en hy gaan sit daar agter en hy vra nie eers vir boeke nie. Ek dink hy (die hoof) het dit baie erger gemaak as wat dit was. Hy maak altyd hierdie groot storie van n ding en dan is dit nie so erg nie (Hansie 24/05/2002).

I thought that these people would ask for much more. He (the principal) made us extremely scared at the beginning. When we first heard about this thing, we were all scared and believed – that this was going to be a panel inspection, but this was not the case. We were very surprised when the gentleman walked into the class and sat at the back and did not ask for books first. I think (the principal) made it more serious than it was. He always makes a big story of things and then it is not so serious (English translation).

Second, the arrival of the evaluation co-ordinator and her briefing of the staff conveyed a slightly different message from that of the principal. Staff were informed that they should not prepare anything special but continue with exactly what they had planned to do. Despite this message many teachers went ahead and prepared special lessons for the evaluation.

Third, teacher conceptions were significantly influenced by stories of experiences with inspections as relayed by the experienced teachers. These experienced teachers relayed experiences of cupboards and classrooms being inspected for neatness, teacher preparations being cross-referenced with samples of learners' work and entries being scrutinised in teacher mark books for accuracy.

Fourth, *Wagpos* teachers were also exposed to views and experiences, both positive and negative, of teachers at other schools during inter-school sporting activities, subject meetings and parent meetings. These activities provided a platform for a two-way exchange of views and experiences.

Fifth, every time the media released an article on WSE or the television channels aired experiences of policy implementation in the provinces, uneasiness and confusion reached heightened levels in the minds of the teachers at the school. Further evidence from teachers responses to questionnaires reflects that an excessively high percentage (81,5%) of *Wagpos* teachers agreed that WSE created anxiety and stress. Furthermore, newsletters distributed to parents originating from the confines of the school as well as documents about WSE received from other schools constantly generated new conceptions of WSE or reinforced ideas already held. A teacher at *Wagpos* shared the contents of a newsletter, which she had received from another school, with the *Wagpos* staff.

Sixth, the conceptions of teachers were constantly built and rebuilt as a result of the informal staff room discussions that they engaged in. Discussions focussed on teacher fears related to the fact that teachers were not confident with OBE teaching and that many teachers had abandoned the assessment forms and other documents that the department had made available to them.

Seventh, individuals generate from their own reading of policy their interpretations and meaning of policy. Evidence from teachers' responses to the questionnaire reflects that 50 percent of *Wagpos* teachers indicated that the policy was made available to them through a circular. This implies that the document has been left open to a variety of interpretations and distortions when disseminated in the form of circulars.

Eighth, understanding was also influenced by interaction with the teacher unions. Since teacher unions sent out strong signals of WSE being similar to inspections, these impressions were filtered through to schools by teacher union representatives. These kinds of messages were absorbed by teachers on the ground.

There has certainly been a coalescing of a number of societal forces and events, which have impacted on stakeholder understanding and implementation of policy. The synergy effect of all these influences one cannot predict – some influences may compliment understanding and positively influence implementation whilst others may be in contradiction with deeply held views of WSE policy and impact negatively on implementation.

School site conceptions of evaluation were constantly built and changed as the different “forces of influence” came together. Therefore, the original proposition is validated.

Proposition 6

Homogenous culture, bureaucratic responsiveness, and hierarchical organisation together compose a positive response to official policy.

The homogeneous culture at *Wagpos* influenced the attitudes and behaviours of the staff. The majority of the teachers shared common religious beliefs, values and principles as well as a deep commitment to improving teaching and learning. For these teachers the universal goal of the WSE policy was to identify weaknesses and receive recommendations for improving teaching and learning. This was thus the key driver for the acceptance of the WSE policy in the first place. Any other goal did not seem to really matter since they agreed unanimously with this critical goal. What is evident from the research is that consensus on a particular goal does not, however, guarantee a change in practice.

Wagpos has a long legacy of compliance with political and bureaucratic authority (see Chapter 4). The school was highly responsive to the bureaucratic decision to implement the WSE policy despite the fact that they were aware of the deadlock in negotiations between the National Ministry and SADTU. The following excerpt from a teacher’s diary reflects that although the union had informed teachers that evaluators should not conduct evaluations, the teachers at *Wagpos* did not resist, showing that there was a strong institutional aversion to conflict and disagreement.

Many people came to me since I am the Union Representative for our school as well as the Brits-Rustenburg area, wanting to know what the union opinion was on WSE. I contacted our office and the answer I got was to inform the membership to cooperate as far as possible. The union attitude was to do nothing and to ask them (the evaluators) not to come (Chaart 10/03/2002).

At the time *Wagpos* was the only school in the province where evaluations took place. The school co-operated willingly with the provincial department – a response that does not differ much from historical ways of complying with political and bureaucratic authority.

The school is a hierarchically organised society and must be seen as a context in which there are impositions, extensions and lines of power and authority. Protocol was strictly followed, rank and authority were respected not only within the school, but this attitude was also visible among the different officials that visited the school. The principal in his position of power and authority was able to command respect and bolster support for WSE implementation. He championed the self-evaluation process with the support of his SMT. The SMT played a pastoral role by instilling a positive attitude in the teachers as well as by conducting follow up sessions with teachers. One member of the SMT expressed his role as follows:

After the feedback if there are any problems in my department, you have to look at these faults and not do it again. We have got a school policy, a subject policy, and if there are any criteria that we have to do better at, we have to do it. I will have to see that teachers under me do the improvements (Hansie 24/05/2002).

Clearly, lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of individuals were strictly adhered to. Level one teachers also had their own conceptions of the roles they had to play in the implementation process as shown by the following quotations:

I think to try and be a good teacher or to try and make the kids enjoy their subjects. And really try and do my work to the best of my ability, even the administration side of it... (Elize 21/05/2002).

But I won't play a managing role, I will just be part of the group that implements whatever the decision is (Marilene 21/05/2002).

Provide assistance to those doing external evaluation. To implement things they give us to do, that is, to implement what the department wants (Focus group 1 16/05/2002).

The three elements, that is, homogenous culture, bureaucratic responsiveness, and hierarchical organisation have together composed a positive response to official policy, therefore the original proposition can be supported.

Proposition 7

The course of policy implementation is influenced both negatively and positively by variables operating within and outside the school context.

First, policymakers had made false assumptions about the ease of implementation, underestimating the complexity of school self-evaluation for novice implementers, since little guidance was provided on the process. Collecting data on present practice, identifying and agreeing on areas for improvement and implementing changes turned out to require skills that the principal and staff did not have. It was a case of “all review and no action”. The absence of related staff development and resource assistance in the form of preparatory training and facilitation in school did nothing to help implementation along.

Second, on a bureaucratic plane, decentralisation⁵¹ has been advocated to both improve efficiency and provide greater sensitivity to local variations in educational needs. Did decentralising WSE policy implementation meet these expectations? It seems that the associated lack of skill in managing self-evaluation at school level may have been mirrored by the lack of skill amongst district officials in managing the change to be implemented at *Wagpos*. Lack of a clear vision of roles and responsibilities coupled with poor communication channels impacted negatively on policy implementation in the school. Senior officials spent many hours writing letters to other officials in order to clarify roles and responsibilities, resulting in unnecessary delays with regard to delivery. The implementation process was hindered by the lack of physical and skilled human resources at circuit and district level. In addition, a lack of proactive leadership at the district/circuit level could also be seen as an impeding factor in WSE policy implementation. According to a district official, follow up to external evaluation was not given priority because:

...in our meetings we have never had time to focus on this. I think it is something that has been shelved (DDM 06/11/2002).

Third, the role of politics in the delay or derailment of policy implementation was not anticipated. Strong political interference from the largest teacher union in the country wreaked havoc in the implementation of the WSE policy creating confusion for teachers and frustration amongst bureaucrats. SADTU called for an urgent moratorium on WSE strongly opposing WSE because they claimed that it was being “imposed upon teachers” and that it is “punitive and not developmental”. SADTU was also in disagreement with the department because they had called for a developmental appraisal system which the

⁵¹ The South African education system is decentralised. The district/circuit is closest to the school. The district has authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services to the cluster of schools within its boundaries.

department had agreed to as part of a collective bargaining agreement during 1996, but which the department had “unceremoniously reneged upon” (see press article, Chapter 6). The union embarked on a programme of mass action, which involved mass meetings, marches and demonstrations.

As a result of negotiations between the Department and SADTU, a Task Team was established to table the major concerns of SADTU and to reach consensus on aligning the DAS and WSE classroom observation components of the two policies. Despite having reached an “amicable solution” there continued to be a delay in WSE implementation. A frustrated senior national official suggested that SADTU’s delay tactics were a carefully orchestrated political stance. According to him SADTU expressed that:

They will come back to us after the conference. It was used to get other people elections, most probably. That is our thinking, we do not know. You will recall that this started around May, they have been dragging it but in the last meeting in August, they came out very clear to say to wait for the Congress. After the Congress⁵² we shall talk better language (Phalani 06/09/2002).

Political interference in the restructuring of districts also impacted negatively on policy implementation. Decentralisation of service delivery was initiated in 1999 and continued through 2002 without much progress being attained. During this turbulent period officials were reported to have experienced high levels of frustration, uncertainty and fear over loss of jobs among those employed at district offices. Finally, in August 2002 three districts were merged, that is, Brits, Mabopane and Themba.

Fourth, several factors contributed positively towards enhancing policy implementation. The school was fortunate to have a loyal and supportive SMT who assisted the principal in carrying out the self-evaluation in a short period of time as well as making the necessary physical and human resources available for the preparation of documents for the entire process.

Fifth, the school received moral support from the school governing body, parents and circuit. The positive attitudes of these individuals spurred those teachers on who were

⁵² SADTU National Congress was held during September 2002. Elections were held for a new executive council.

uncertain or confused. Neither the school governing body chairperson nor the circuit manager provided any pedagogical support to staff but they did visit the school at the start of the evaluation and on completion of the evaluation.

This proposition is valid in light of the extensive data that supports it.

7.3 Outcomes of the WSE policy implementation process

Did the implementation (though incomplete) of the WSE policy lead to positive gains for the staff and the school? The data reflects that the losses far outweigh the negligible gains recorded in this research.

On a positive note, I have found that *Wagpos* has succeeded to a limited extent in generating a whole school culture of quality assurance. Teachers appear to have gained a more strategic and enlightened view of external evaluations, which could ultimately result in them conveying WSE in a more positive way to other educators. A gain, probably more on the part of learners, was that the instructional timetable was reconfigured to allow teachers more time per teaching session. Furthermore, immediate action was taken with regard to enforcing safety precautions in the workshops.

On the negative side, as soon as WSE was announced, teacher appraisals, which were being conducted by the principal, were put on hold as attention was to be now focussed on what was perceived to warrant immediate attention. Implementation of the DAS policy had also been discontinued because of logistical problems. Basically, teacher appraisal and development ceased altogether in the school environment.

There is no evidence from the case study that teachers gained substantially from the WSE experience. Whilst a minority of teachers described the experience as useful and enlightening, the overwhelming majority expressed that it was a period of intense pressure and extreme stress. Feedback sessions during and after the evaluation were brief and unconstructive in most cases. Some recommendations were also contradictory to what subject advisors were advocating hence the value was highly questionable. This was labelled as a disappointment because at the outset teachers embraced the policy with the belief that they would gain ideas on how to improve. Teacher workload did not lessen and

teacher morale seemed to hang in the balance. Thus the whole idea of teacher improvement is debunked in the absence of empirical grounding for this expectation.

The data did not suggest that there were any extraordinary gains for the school as a whole. A transparent partnership approach was developed by the principal and some teachers with the evaluation team. The principal was successful in encouraging a teacher whom he believed was incompetent to resign from the school. The principal's request to the Department of Education for financial assistance to conduct routine maintenance at the school was unsuccessful. A "spin-off" from the process was that the school governing body dedicated funds for the immediate upgrade of school infrastructure. Overall, in the absence of a school development plan the school could not be put on a "path to recovery".

7.4 Implications for education planning and policy

First and foremost, one important finding was the lack of coherence within the WSE policy framework and across similar policies. Policies should be developed such that they are internally coherent and reflect "joined up thinking" with other related policies so as to facilitate understanding in the minds of implementers. Change will only be possible if new policies make sense to the implementers and if the new knowledge is integrated with implementers' prior sets of understandings and experiences.

Second, I want to suggest a rethinking of the strategies currently employed by government to ensure maximum participation in policy development. I do believe that creative strategies should be used consistently and persistently to encourage broad-based stakeholder collaboration and participation in the policy development arena. Encouraging union participation especially in policy development is crucial for successful implementation.

Third, one striking observation in this case study is that the implementation process came to a halt because of a lack of leadership, among other things, at the district/circuit level. By using a combination of in-service training emphasising development and growth and replacement of leaders through attrition, leaders can be developed to lead and facilitate implementation at specific points in the chain. I firmly believe that these strategic leaders must be engaged in vision-building and working with other leaders to think through

problems and conceive alternative solutions. A paramount task of the leader is to build capacity to handle any and all innovations – which does not mean to implement them all.

Fourth, a further striking finding in this study is that misconceptions about WSE existed in the minds of so many implementers. Therefore, I argue strongly for rigorous advocacy campaigns to be directed and sustained over prolonged periods of time so that stakeholders come to increasingly understand the policy, clarify misconceptions and believe in the effectiveness of the approach to change being used. Instead of promoting specific innovations, policymakers should be emphasising broad-based programmes (i.e. incorporating all evaluation initiatives) and providing corresponding support for local development of specific forms of implementation, thereby facilitating the clarity and explicitness of each policy on the part of users.

Fifth, if we are serious about change, the implementation of any new policy should be directed towards improving local system capabilities through data feedback and other forms of support, rather than towards judging success or failure (Berman & McLaughlin 1978:368). There should also be more mechanisms for contact among would-be implementers at both the initiation or adoption stages, and especially during implementation. Provision of resources may not be politically and financially feasible in many situations, but there is no question that effective implementation will not occur without them⁵³.

Sixth, an important finding was the lack of a system for monitoring implementation – except during the external evaluation phase. I strongly argue for the need for institutionalisation of an information-gathering system to assess and address problems of implementation. If there is horizontal and vertical two-way communication, there will be more knowledge about the status of change. Williams (1980) claims that the need is not for formal research methodologies, but for “competent, reasonable people” in the system to be concerned about improvement through careful observation, questioning and discussions. This is none other than the systematic social interaction referred to so frequently as the core ingredient of developing knowledge and meaning about change (Fullan & Stiegelbauer 1992).

⁵³ Creating more time does not necessarily mean more money. The existing school schedule could be re-organised to create time for dealing with implementation problems, if it is seen as crucial to effective change.

Seventh, the incentive system for implementation would have to be drastically altered especially at the school level. If there is one finding that stands out in this research study, it is that effective implementation of policy requires time, personal interaction and contacts, in-service training and other forms of people-based support. Therefore, if implementers are to remain eager and committed to change, a system of incentives (extrinsic rewards) should accompany the new challenges that confront stakeholders.

7.5 Chapter summary

In this thesis I have explored stakeholder understandings and perceptions of the WSE policy as well as documented the unfolding of the WSE policy at *Wagpos* High, given the presence of other competing policies. I have shown how the apparently simple sequences of events depend on complex chains of reciprocal interaction. Hence I have built each part of the chain with others in view. Though I have isolated my discussion of policy design from policy implementation (see Chapter 5 for policy design and Chapter 6 for policy implementation), I have attempted to bring them into closer correspondence with each other in Chapter 7.

I have provided new empirical evidence and insights into implementation of competing evaluation policies in receptive contexts. I have also tried to capture the moments of triumph and success, as well as the frustrating and difficult times. I have shown that change processes embrace both these extremes, as well as the myriad of shades in between.

The research has shown that when implementers are faced with multiple competing policies they adopt a particular stance to implementation. This stance is determined by what is considered to be immediate, practical and known to the implementers. Those in positions of power determine what is immediate and practical. However, what is known about the policy may not necessarily be what the policy expectations are. Thus the chances are that mandated “new” policies may be immediately embraced and “old” policies may be temporarily or even permanently abandoned. And both “old” and “new” policies may be implemented in ways that may differ considerably from the policymaker’s original vision.

The study shows that for policies to have desired impacts there has to be a high degree of “coherence” among the different related policies. What this means is that it is imperative

that the policies have a common values base. But such “coherence” among related policies has to also be coupled strongly with “coherence” within individual policy frameworks or else the desired impacts may not be achieved. The evidence also reflects that another aspect seldom neglected in transforming contexts is the need to have a combined and well-coordinated approach to policy implementation. Considerations on such a strategy will lead towards enhancing the chances of successful multiple policy implementations in rapidly transforming contexts.

The study presents the argument that stakeholders who have negative experiences of an evaluation policy issue remain sceptical of the value of similar policies. Stakeholders continue to draw on these deeply entrenched negative experiences to guide their future actions. Overcoming this scepticism is extremely difficult due to the many and sometimes unsuspecting, competing “forces of influence” operating in the environment. As a result, stakeholders find it virtually impossible to make the transition.

The multitudinous “forces of influence” constantly impacted on *Wagpos* practitioners, reinforcing or changing their conceptions of evaluation. Some of these forces are more dominant than others. The study acknowledges that although one cannot accurately predict the synergy effect of the forces on stakeholder understandings of policy, it is sensible to assume that these “forces of influence” may compliment views already held or oppose such views and either positively influence or severely hinder implementation.

I have found supporting evidence in this research study that there are key ingredients that compose a positive response to policy. These ingredients are a homogenous culture, bureaucratic responsiveness and hierarchical organisation. Co-existence of these three elements sets the stage for a positive response to official policy.

In my opening line of this dissertation I posed a question as follows: “Why is it that policies are seldom implemented as planned?” The research I have presented in this thesis has shown that policy implementation is not a “rational technical process in which official policy is a mirror image of institutional practice” (Jansen 2002). The study provides evidence that the course of policy implementation is influenced both positively and negatively by variables that exist and operate both within and outside the school context. At *Wagpos* these variables included staff development and resource assistance. At district level

the variables were more pronounced, that is, lack of physical and skilled human resources, poor communication networks, lack of a clear vision of roles and responsibilities, to name but a few. Politics played a profound role in the delay and derailment of policy implementation. However, variables such as a loyal and dedicated SMT and moral support from the school governing body, parents and circuit contributed positively towards steering policy implementation along.

There are also other “lessons learnt” from the case study on policy implementation at *Wagpos* High. Policy matters – it creates frameworks of aspiration and expectation, it shapes resource allocation, and it invites detailed consideration of implementation. But implementation should not be divorced from policy. From the outset the emphasis was on designing the WSE policy, obtaining agreement at the local level, and securing donor and local funds for the rollout. All this was done quickly. The later steps of implementation were considered to be “a simple process” that would resolve itself if the initial policy agreements were negotiated and commitments were made. But the seemingly routine questions of implementation formed the foundation which would determine the outcome of the policy, as was seen in the *Wagpos* case study.

The problem is to make the difficulties of implementation a part of the initial formulation of policy. Implementation must not be conceived as a process that takes place after, and independent of, the design of policy (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973:143). If implementation was considered during policy formulation then parallels would have been drawn with the DAS and this would have negated some of the subsequent difficulties experienced with the teacher unions during implementation. For example, a common teacher observation schedule would have been designed since this is an element in both policies.

For WSE policy implementation multiple stakeholders at various levels of the bureaucracy are involved. Overall, the process is lengthy and rendered unpredictable because of the many decision sequences in implementation, for example, external evaluation to be done by the school; self-evaluation to be done by the provincial team; oral and written reports to be done by the provincial team and then school development plans to be done by the school and district. Having each of these phases being conducted by different groups of individuals adds to the probability of stoppage or delay. This has been shown by the district’s inability (due to many reasons – see section 6.3.1) to assist the school with school development

planning resulting in (temporary?) stoppage of implementation. If the policymakers are to close the gap between design and implementation they should consider more direct means of accomplishing ends.

Finally, there may be people who think that attempts at implementing multiple policies in

A better balance and clear prioritisation seem to be needed when expecting schools to implement multiple policies. So also is more understanding of how stakeholders interpret, subvert, reinterpret, and assimilate policy ambitions through the actions they choose in the contexts that they operate in. The study also foregrounds the need to recognise the attitudes, values and motivation of teachers in processes of policy change. This is part of the complex interplay between the formulation and implementation of policy – the “policy gap” (Sayed & Jansen 2001) – that remains a central concern for system change. All these issues invite sharply focused enquiry to determine why such fundamental disjunctions occur and whether they really are inevitable. Also, I do believe that there is a need for research that unpacks each of the many issues highlighted in my study at the levels of theoretical frameworks and new models for understanding how multiple policies are implemented in rapidly transforming contexts such as South Africa.

This thesis has indicated the difficulties of implementing planned policy change even in contexts where there is a receptiveness to change. A profound contribution of this research is that it exposes the difficulties of formulating and realising appropriate institutional responses in a shifting and uncertain climate. Recently there has been an unleashing of a plethora of initiatives to rewrite the educational map of South Africa. The release of multiple policies has tested the capacity of schools for change up to and beyond reasonable limits. The research has shown that even in cases where schools are enthusiastic to implement policy they too experience difficulties and resort to compromises. Deeply entrenched practices and beliefs persist in the face of new policy. As teachers are constantly challenged to implement the bewildering array of policy texts issued about school and teacher evaluations in a relatively short space of time, these overloaded and fatigued teachers invent new ways of coping with the change. Teachers perceive what is significant in a practical situation and decide on appropriate action.

The skills, aspirations and energy of the leader are key attributes for steering the school through various cycles of change. Unity of purpose and harmonious cooperation among

members in an organisation are also essential if implementation of a reform is to occur, let alone succeed.

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Finally, there may be people that think that attempts at implementing multiple policies in transforming contexts such as South Africa are in vain – that these attempts may prove to have minimal chances (or none?) of success. I still believe that difficulties of implementation can be mitigated, but I urge continued scepticism if anyone suggests that inherent features of political life can be summarily abolished.

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What we call the beginning is often the end

And to make an end is to make a beginning

The end is where we start from.

(T.S. Eliot 1969:197).

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APPENDICES

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- C Interview Schedule 11 A: National Department of Education Officials
- D Interview Schedule 11 B: Union Officials
- E Interview Schedule 11 C: Provincial Co-ordinator
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- M Document Analysis: Schedule 1V
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- O Questionnaire
- P Observation Checklist for School Visit
- Q Contact Summary Form
- R Document Summary Form

APPENDIX A



NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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To: Mr Neethling
The Principal
Wagpos High School

From: Mr I.S. Molale
Director: Co-ordination

Date: 10 April 2002


Subject: **REQUEST TO ALLOW MRS ANUSHA LUCEN, A DOCTORATE STUDENT TO CONDUCT A FIELD OF STUDY AT YOUR SCHOOL**

The above-matter has reference.

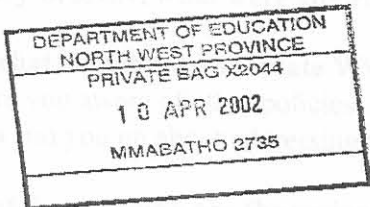
You are kindly requested to allow the said student to do a field survey at your school. Upon the completion of the study, we will be in the position of sharing the findings of the research with you.

Your usual co-operation would be highly appreciated

Yours sincerely


DIRECTOR: CO-ORDINATION

cc Mr J. Thage: District Manager



Re a Some Dikolong • Re a dtra ma dikolong • Ons werk in ons skole • We are working in our schools
• Re a sebetse dikolong • Siyasebenz' ezikoleni • Ha bina eswikolweni • Re a shuma zwikoloni
• Siya sebenta etikoleni • Siyasebenz' ezikolweni • Siya berenga ezikolweni



APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1A
POLICY DESIGNER

This interview schedule was specifically designed for purposes of interviewing the United Kingdom consultant who was commissioned to formulate the Whole School Evaluation policy.

- 1. Could you explain your role in the development of the government's policy on Whole School Evaluation?**
 - How did you come to be involved?
 - What was your Brief from the Department of Education with regard to the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - How did you go about implementing your Brief?
 - What timeframe did the Department of Education give you for preparation of the policy document?
 - What did you experience as the major constraints, if any?
- 2. To what extent and by what mechanisms did stakeholder consultations take place?**
 - In your view, who were the key stakeholders to the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - How were the stakeholders involved?
 - From which stakeholders would you have welcomed greater input?
- 3. What do you understand to have been the main goals of the policy? (Looking at the policy broadly, what were you responding to?)**
- 4. To what extent did you relate WSE policy to other evaluation related policies?**
 - Were you aware of other policies with similar evaluation goals?
 - How did you go about addressing this?
- 5. What do you think are the major challenges facing implementation of the policy?**
 - Capacity to implement i.e., insufficient suitably qualified examiners?
 - Lack of training of principals to conduct self-evaluation?
 - Scepticism of teachers with regard to evaluation?
 - Role of unions?
 - Weak relationship to other policies?
- 6. What do you think will be the effects of WSE on teacher development?**
 - Influence with regard to types of in-service courses
 - District development programmes
 - Provincial development programmes

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IIA
POLICYMAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of individual National Department of Education officials on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

IIA: The National Department of Education Officials

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. Could you explain your role in the development of this policy?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by *school effectiveness*?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. Do you think that Whole School Evaluation will have any influence on teacher development in schools? Comment briefly.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IIB
POLICYMAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of officials from the various unions i.e., South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), NAPTOSA, and SAOU on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

IIB: Union Officials

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. Could you explain your role with regard to:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by “*school effectiveness*”?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. Do you think that Whole School Evaluation will have any influence on teacher development in schools? Comment briefly.

APPENDIX E

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IIC
POLICYMAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS**

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the North West Department of Education Provincial co-ordinator on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

IIC: Provincial co-ordinator

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. Could you explain your role with regard to:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by “*school effectiveness*”?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. Has training been provided for implementation of the policy? (Yes/No)
 - For whom was training provided?
 - By whom, duration of training; when was training held and where?
11. What are your expectations of the WSE process?
 - Expectations with regard to school improvement

- Development of districts
- Provincial & national plans

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE III
POLICYMAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the North West Department of Education External Evaluation team members on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

III: External Evaluation Team

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. What is your role in WSE (in your own words)?
3. Could you explain your role's responsibilities:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy
4. The WSE is the main strategy of WSE – what are other strategies? What is mandated by the government?
5. What are the main challenges of this policy in WSE?
6. The literature indicates a number of policy tensions/evaluation:
 - The tension between the parts or issue between "Whole School Evaluation" and "School Improvement"
 - The tension between the parts of "Whole School Evaluation" and the "School Improvement Approach"
7. What do you see as the policy difference between WSE and the curriculum and the Developmental Support policy?
8. What do you see as the biggest challenge of the implementation of WSE in the implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major practical issues of implementation of WSE in the implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. How has the WSE provided for implementation of the policy in WSE?
 - How has been was trained people in WSE?
 - By whom, duration of training, when was training conducted?
11. What are your expectations of the WSE process?
 - Expectations with regard to school improvement

APPENDIX F

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IID
POLICYMAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS**

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the North West Department of Education External Evaluation team members on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

IID: External Evaluation Team

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. Could you explain your role with regard to:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by “*school effectiveness*”?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. Has training been provided for implementation of the policy? (Yes/No)
 - For whom was training provided?
 - By whom, duration of training; when was training held and where?
11. What are your expectations of the WSE process?
 - Expectations with regard to school improvement

- Development of districts
- Provincial & national plans

APPENDIX G

FREE WRITING SCHEDULE IIIA: DISTRICT OFFICIALS

Before commencing with the focused group district official interviews, I will request district officials to write down their responses to specific questions on the free writing schedule.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is your understanding of Whole School Evaluation?
2. What is Whole School Evaluation, in your view, responding to?
3. What is your opinion as to the main goals of this policy?
4. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
5. What do you see as the major opportunities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?

APPENDIX G

FREE WRITING SCHEDULE IIIA: DISTRICT OFFICIALS

Before commencing with the focussed group district official interviews I will request district officials to write down their responses to specific questions on the free writing schedule.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is your understanding of Whole School Evaluation?
2. What was Whole School Evaluation, in your view, responding to?
3. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy?
4. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
5. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?

APPENDIX H

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IIE
POLICYMAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS**

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the North West Department of Education District Officials on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context. Focus group interviews will be conducted with district officials.

IIE: District Officials

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. Could you explain your role with regard to:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by “*school effectiveness*”?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. Have you received training so as to provide support for the Whole School Evaluation implementation process? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, by whom and for how long?
 - When and where was the training?
 - Comment on the nature of the training received.

11. Have you already provided training to schools? (Yes/No) Briefly describe the nature of this training?

12. What are your expectations of the WSE process?

- Expectations with regard to school improvement
- Development of districts
- Provincial & national plans

HF: Principal of Case Study School

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what do you think WSE is in your view? Responding to:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
3. Could you explain your role with regard to:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school improvement. What is your understanding of the term "school improvement"?
5. What is your opinion on the main goal of WSE? Responding to:
 - The Department has a number of policies related to curriculum:
 - the five year and circular points of view, "National Curriculum Framework" and "Systemic Evaluation".
 - Do you see any direct relation of these policies, "Whole School Evaluation" and the Development Appraisal policy, if any?
6. What do you see as the policy or interface between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
7. What do you see as the major challenges or roadblocks that you feel to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
8. What do you see as the major responsibilities of principals for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. Have you received training so as to provide support for the Whole School Evaluation implementation process? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, by whom and for how long?
 - When and where was the training?
 - Comment on the nature of the training received.

APPENDIX I

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IIF
POLICYMAKERS AND IMPLEMENTERS**

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the Principal/Deputy Principal from the case study school on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

IIF: Principal of Case Study School

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. Could you explain your role with regard to:
 - the development of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
 - the implementation of the Whole School Evaluation policy?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by “*school effectiveness*”?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. Have you received training so as to provide support for the Whole School Evaluation implementation process? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, by whom and for how long?
 - When and where was the training?
 - Comment on the nature of the training received.

Before the self-evaluation

11. What preparations are you involved in at school level for self-evaluation?

- Training sessions for staff & governing body (by whom, when, duration)
- Has the evaluation co-ordinator been selected? (if yes, how was this done)
- Planning for data collection, data analysis & reporting
- Drafting of a schedule for self-evaluation/external evaluation to be done?

12. Have you received any external support in preparation for implementation of self-evaluation?

- From the governing body; district office; national office; cluster schools
- Nature of this support

13. What are your expectations of the self-evaluation process? (elicit this response 4 weeks before and then 2 days before the self-evaluation).

NOTE: During the self-evaluation period the principal will provide brief reviews of the day's happenings. Two teachers at the school as well as the evaluation co-ordinator will keep researcher-constructed dairies. I will also keep a diary.

After the self-evaluation

14. Discuss what actually happened during the self-evaluation phase.

- Principal conducted classroom observations
- Teachers presented specially prepared lessons
- The evaluation co-ordinator played an active role
- Response rate of parent questionnaire
- Teaching and learning was disrupted during this time

15. What are the effects of what happened during the self-evaluation phase?

- Teachers began to prepare more seriously for the external evaluation
- Some teachers became demotivated
- Parent body became aware of the evaluation and pledged their support for the process
- Learner reactions to the self-evaluation

Before external evaluation

16. What preparations are you involved in at school level for the implementation of the external evaluation?

- Training sessions for staff & governing body (by whom, when, duration)
- Drawing up of a schedule for external evaluation/school development planning/implementation of school development plans etc?

17. Have you received any external support in preparation for implementation of external evaluation?

- From the governing body; district office; national office; cluster schools
- Nature of this support

18. What are your expectations of the external evaluation process? (elicit this response 1 week before and then 2 days before the external evaluation).

After the external evaluation

19. Discuss what actually happened during the implementation of the external evaluation.

- report on the pre-evaluation visit
- What events during the inspection week surfaced in staff room discussions?
- What was the principal's account of the evaluation day-by-day?

20. What are the effects of what happened during the external evaluation?

- What was said in relation to each of the nine focus areas being evaluated at the oral report stage at the end of the week?
- How did you and your staff feel during the week following the evaluation? (more relaxed; stressed waiting to receive the formal report; despondent after the oral report).
- What issues were raised concerning the nine focus areas evaluated by the formal report?
- What are your views and your staff's views on the issues raised by the external evaluators? (disappointment; overall satisfaction; need for improvement)
- What are the views of the chair of the governing body on the external evaluator's report? (disappointment; overall satisfaction; need for improvement)
- What happens to the school development plan? (school planning team established; district provides support; school governing body is involved; no planning takes place)

APPENDIX J

TEACHER FREE WRITING SCHEDULE IIIB

Before commencing with the focussed group teacher interviews I will request teachers to write down their responses to specific questions on the free writing schedule.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is your understanding of Whole School Evaluation?
2. What was Whole School Evaluation, in your view, responding to?
3. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy?
4. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
5. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
6. The WSE policy states that WSE is a broad approach to the development of a school's understanding of its own effectiveness. When in your opinion are the main goals of this policy are achieved?
7. The Department has a number of policies related to "evaluation".
 - * Do you see any similarities or differences between "Whole School Evaluation" and "Self-Evaluation"?
 - * Do you see any similarities or differences between "Whole School Evaluation" and the "Departmental Appraisal" policy (DASA)?
8. What do you see as the policy differences between "Self-Evaluation" and the Departmental Appraisal policy?
9. What do you see as the major limitations or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
10. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?
11. Have you received training for the implementation of self-evaluation?
 - * If yes, by whom & on how long?
 - * When & where was the training?
 - * Comment on the nature of the training received.
12. How have you reacted to the process?

APPENDIX K

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IIG
POLICY IMPLEMENTERS**

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the teachers from the case study school on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context. I will conduct focus group interviews with 4/5 teachers in a group as well as individual interviews with selected teachers.

IIG: Teachers in the Case Study School

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. What do you see to be your role?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by “school effectiveness”?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?

Before the self-evaluation

10. Have you received training for the implementation of self-evaluation? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, by whom & for how long?
 - When & where was the training?
 - Comment on the nature of the training received.
11. How have you prepared for the process?

- Subject department preparations
 - Cluster schools
12. Have you received any external support in preparation for the implementation of self-evaluation?
- Governing body; district office; national office; cluster schools

After the self-evaluation

13. What actually happened during the “self-evaluation process”?
- Principal conducted classroom observations
 - Teachers presented specially prepared lessons
 - The evaluation co-ordinator played an active role
 - Response rate of parent questionnaire
 - Teaching and learning was disrupted during this time
14. What were the challenges & successes experienced during and after the self-evaluation?
- Teachers began to prepare more seriously for the external evaluation
 - Some teachers became demotivated
 - Parent body became aware of the evaluation and pledged their support for the process
 - Learner reactions to the self-evaluation

Before the external evaluation

15. How are you preparing for the external evaluation?
16. How do you feel about the evaluation?

After the external evaluation

17. What actually happened during the external evaluation?
- report on the pre-evaluation visit
 - What events during the inspection week surfaced in staff room discussions?
 - What was the principal’s account of the evaluation to teachers on a day-by-day basis?
 - Your account of the evaluation day-by-day.
18. What are the effects of what happened during the external evaluation process?
- What was said with regard to each of the nine focus areas at the oral report stage at the end of the week?
 - How did you and the staff feel during the week following the evaluation? (more relaxed; stressed waiting to receive the formal report; despondent after the oral report).
 - What issues were raised on the nine focus areas by the formal report?
 - What are your views and that of the staff on the issues raised by the external evaluators? (disappointment; overall satisfaction; need for improvement)

- What are the views of the chair of the governing body on the external evaluator's report? (disappointment; overall satisfaction; need for improvement)
- What happens to the school development plan? (school planning team established; district provides support; school governing body is involved; no planning takes place)

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the school governing body from the case study school on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how their understandings and existing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

III: School Governing Body at the Case Study School

Before the start of the process:

1. How do you understand the WSE?
2. What is your view on the school's understanding of?
3. What do you see to be important?
4. The WSE is a policy that WSE is a policy that school development. What is understood by school development?
5. What do you see to be the main goal of the policy on WSE?
6. The Department of Education has a School Development Unit and:
 - * Do you see any similarities and/or differences between the School Development Unit and the School Evaluation Unit?
 - * Do you see any similarities and/or differences between the School Development Unit and the School Evaluation Unit?
7. What do you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?
8. What do you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?
9. What do you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?

Before the start of the process:

10. What do you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?
 - * How do you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?
 - * What do you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?
 - * Can you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?
11. What do you see to be the main goal of the WSE policy on school development and school development policy?

APPENDIX L

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IIG
POLICY IMPLEMENTERS**

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the understandings of the school governing body from the case study school on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy and to establish how these understandings and competing policy influences shape the implementation of Whole School Evaluation in the school context.

IIIH: School Governing Body at the Case Study School

Before the evaluation process

1. What is your understanding of WSE?
2. That is, what was WSE (in your view) responding to?
3. What do you see to be your role?
4. The WSE policy states that WSE is to bring about school effectiveness. What do you understand by “*school effectiveness*”?
5. What in your opinion are the main goals of this policy on WSE?
6. The Department has a number of policies related to “evaluation”;
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and “Systemic Evaluation”?
 - Do you see any similar points or issues between “Whole school Evaluation” and the “Development Appraisal” policy (DAS)?
7. What do you see as the policy differences between WSE, Systemic Evaluation and the Development Appraisal policy?
8. What do you see as the major limitations or constraints with regard to the implementation of Whole school Evaluation?
9. What do you see as the major possibilities or opportunities for the successful implementation of Whole School Evaluation?

Before the self-evaluation

10. Have you received training for the implementation of self-evaluation? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, by whom & for how long?
 - When & where was the training?
 - Comment on the nature of the training received.
11. What are your expectations of the self-evaluation process?

After the self-evaluation

12. What actually happened during the “self-evaluation process”?
13. What were the challenges experienced during and after the self-evaluation?
14. What were the successes experienced during and after the self-evaluation?

Before the external evaluation

15. How are you preparing for the external evaluation?
16. How do you feel about the evaluation?

After the external evaluation

17. What actually happened during the external evaluation?
 - report on the pre-evaluation visit
 - What events during the inspection week surfaced in staff room discussions?
 - What was the principal’s account of the evaluation to you on a day-by-day basis?
 - Your account of the evaluation day-by-day.
18. What are the effects of what happened during the external evaluation process?
 - What was said with regard to each of the nine focus areas at the oral report stage at the end of the week?
 - How did you and the staff feel during the week following the evaluation? (more relaxed; stressed waiting to receive the formal report; despondent after the oral report).
 - What issues are raised on the nine focus areas by the formal report?
 - What are your views and that of the staff on the issues raised by the external evaluators? (disappointment; overall satisfaction; need for improvement)
 - What happens to the school development plan? (school planning team established; district provides support; school governing body is involved; no planning takes place)

APPENDIX M

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE IV

Three documents i.e., *Whole School Evaluation, Systemic Evaluation and Development Appraisal* will be analysed for the purpose of obtaining answers to the sub question: *What are the continuities as well as contradictions between WSE and related education policies of government, and how are these tensions reflected in stakeholder understandings of WSE? In addition, I will analyse each policy document in order to establish the conception of “evaluation”.*

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the sources of the policy documents?

- What are the historical origins of each of the policy documents?

2. What are the intentions of the documents?

- What rationale does the document give for each policy? That is, what is the policy responding to?
- What are the explicit goals for the evaluation process as stated in each document?
- What are the implied goals for the evaluation process in each document?

3. How do the different policies relate to each other?

- Describe in detail noting cases where the goals are coherent or contradictory.

4. What are the conceptions of implementation?

- What are the important statements in the document?
- What is the “theory of action”?
- How is the relationship between policy formulation and implementation conceptualised?

APPENDIX N 1

“STRUCTURED TEACHER DIARIES” V

Note: The purpose of the diary is to capture stakeholder understandings and enactment of the Whole school Evaluation policy. Three teachers will keep diaries of the WSE process as it unfolds. At least one teacher will be a senior teacher and another a more junior teacher so as to obtain their individual perspectives on the implementation process of WSE. The third teacher would be a member of management. I will send a letter to the teachers to explain the structure, format, content of the diary and information about a training session as well as to thank them for their willingness and enthusiasm to participate in the research project.

TEACHER DIARY COMPOSITION AND CONSTRUCTION

The Whole School Evaluation process is to have five key phases to it i.e., preparation phase for evaluations; self-evaluation phase; external evaluation phase; school development planning phase and implementation of school development plan.

Guidelines:

- You are requested to keep a diary for each of the phases of the Whole School Evaluation process.
- You are expected to make five entries for each phase. . This may be represented diagrammatically as follows:

	Phase	No. of entries				
One	Preparation for self-evaluation/external evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
Two	Self-evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
Three	External evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
Four	School Development Planning	1	2	3	4	5
Five:	Implementation of school development plan	1	2	3	4	5

- Guiding questions for the “entries” per phase are provided below.
- It is expected that your diary entries will focus on these questions as well as on other critical incidents that may arise.
- If something critical happens then this should be written up as one entry.
- It is imperative that you report on your conversations with others, your observations and personal reflections of the processes as they unfold.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR “ENTRIES” PER PHASE*Phase One: Preparation for self-evaluation*

- What training has been received? (by whom; when; duration; nature of training)
- When was the staff informed about the evaluation? (who informed them; by what means)
- What are the expectations of the staff?

- Is there preparation of specific lesson plans?
- Are teachers engaging in trial lessons?
- Is there a roster to inform teachers who will be visited?
- Are teachers engaged in preparation after school & during the weekends?
- What kind of preparation is the governing body doing? (parent meetings)
- What has been the role of the district and provincial officials?
- What staff room discussions surface during this time?
- Comment on levels of stress/anxiety of all.

Phase One: Preparation for external-evaluation

- Has there been sharing of experiences after self-evaluation? (staff meetings, subject department meetings)
- What are the expectations of the staff?
- Is there preparation of specific lesson plans?
- Are teachers engaging in trial lessons?
- Are teachers engaged in preparation after school & during the weekends?
- What kind of preparation is the governing body doing? (parent meetings)
- What has been the role of the district and provincial officials as well as cluster schools?
- What staff room discussions surface during this time?
- Comment on levels of stress/anxiety of all/'positives' as well
- What preparation is the school involved in to improve the surroundings?

Phase Two: Self-evaluation

- Who conducted the evaluation?
- How many staff members were involved?
- How many classes were visited?
- Comment on the administration of the parent questionnaire (logistics, response rate).
- What staff room discussions surface during this time?
- Is the staff kept informed? (number of staff meetings)
- What is the duration of the self-evaluation process?
- Comment on levels of stress/anxiety of all/'positives' as well'
- Release of principal's report to staff, governing body, district.
- Comments that surfaced after the release of the report.
- What were the challenges and successes that were experienced during the process.

Phase Three: External evaluation

- Description of the panel of examiners (size, areas of expertise etc).
- What was the duration of the evaluation?
- How many classes were visited?
- How many teachers and learners were interviewed?
- Comment on the administration of the parent questionnaire (logistics, response rate).
- What inputs are received from the governing body and district?
- What staff room discussions surface during this time?
- Is the staff kept informed? (number of staff meetings)
- Comment on levels of stress/anxiety of all.

- Release of panel's oral report to staff, governing body, district.
- Comments that surfaced after the release of the report.
- Atmosphere in the school after the evaluation.
- What were the challenges and successes that were experienced during the process.

Phase Four: School development planning

- How long after the evaluation did planning begin?
- Who is involved in the planning?
- What kind of support is received from the district, school-governing body, cluster schools etc?
- Comments on the process as it is followed.
- Was the plan shared with other staff members?
- Was the plan submitted to the district office?
- Was an implementation plan also drawn up?
- What were the general comments on the implementation plan?

Phase Five: Implementation of school development plan

- How long after the release of the plan did implementation begin?
- What are the challenges being experienced? (inadequate resources, low teacher morale, lack of leadership)
- What are the successes being experienced? (restructuring at school, renewed enthusiasm among teachers, strong leadership)
- Who is involved in monitoring the implementation?
- What feedback mechanisms are in place?
- Is there a review of the plan?

APPENDIX N 2

LETTER TO TEACHERS:

Po Box 22149
Lyttelton
0140

30 January 2002

Dear Colleague

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation to you for volunteering your kind assistance with research being undertaken into the implementation of the new government policy on Whole School Evaluation. I also wish to guarantee that the information you supply will be treated with absolute confidentiality. This information will be used for research purposes only.

The Whole School Evaluation process is to have five key phases to it i.e., preparation phase for evaluations; self-evaluation phase; external evaluation phase; school development planning phase and implementation of school development plan. I am interested in keeping a diary for a period of 10 months in order to capture critical incidents in each of the phases of implementation. In addition to you, two other colleagues at your school have also volunteered to keep diaries for the duration of this period.

A training session will be held prior to the commencement of the data collection process during which time you will be briefed on details related to the task. It is envisaged that the training will last for one day at the University of Pretoria, Groenkloof Campus. Details pertaining to the exact date and time will be confirmed at a later date and you will be notified in due course.

Enclosed are documents pertaining to the diary construction. It would be appreciated if you could peruse through these documents, noting key issues for discussion, in preparation for the forthcoming training session. The completion of the diary should not take too much time as I have endeavoured to make it both interesting and easy to complete by having designed a template for you to work on.

In conclusion may I add that your assistance in this research will not only be sincerely appreciated but will, I hope, make a contribution of some value to improving policy implementation in our schools.

Yours sincerely

A.Lucen
PhD Student

APPENDIX O
QUESTIONNAIRE

PREFACE: The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about the principal's and teachers' understanding of the Whole School Evaluation Policy. The information you supply will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.

PART A

EDUCATOR INFORMATION

PLEASE FILL IN OR CROSS (X) THE APPROPRIATE OPTION

1. Designation of educator

Teacher level 1	Principal	Deputy principal	Head of Department	Other (specify)
1	2	3	4	5

2. Main teaching subject area

Maths/ Science	Technical/ Skills	Languages	Commerce	Humanities	Other (specify)
1	2	3	4	5	6

3. Age

Under 25	25-29	30-34	35-40	40-49	50-59
1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Teaching experience in years

0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	More than 20
1	2	3	4	5

5. Gender

Male	Female
1	2

6. Formal qualifications (completed)

2 year diploma only	3 year diploma only	Degree only	Degree and diploma	More than one degree	Other (specify)
1	2	3	4	5	6

7. Type of school

Primary	Secondary	Combined
1	2	3

8. Description of the school

Urban	Rural	Not sure
1	2	3

PART B

Whole School Evaluation was to be introduced into schools in January 2001. Many educators became aware of this plan through departmental policy.

The questions below inquire about the information available to you about the Whole School Evaluation policy.

PLEASE FILL IN OR CROSS (X) THE APPROPRIATE OPTION.

1. Are you aware of the policy document on Whole School Evaluation?

Yes	No
1	2

2. Was the document made available to all educators in your school?

Yes	No
1	2

3. If yes, please state how?

Workshop	Circular	Conference	Other (specify)
1	2	3	4

4. Do you have a personal copy of the policy document on Whole School Evaluation?

Yes	No
1	2

5. How did you first become aware of the policy on Whole School Evaluation?

I read the policy document	1
I was told by the Head of Department	2
I was told by the principal	3
I was invited to a workshop	4
It was discussed at a staff meeting	5
Other (specify)	6

PART C

PART C RELATES TO THE DEPARTMENT POLICY ON WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION.

Part C may only be answered if your response to item B 1 is YES.

	Yes	No	Not sure
1. It is easy to understand			
2. It provides clear guidelines for implementation			
3. It allows for flexible implementation			

PART D

SOME PEOPLE ARGUE THAT WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN INSPECTION PROCESS, WHILST OTHERS SEE IT AS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTAL TOOL TO BRING ABOUT SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS.

How strongly do you feel about each of the following statements, which list reasons sometimes offered to explain the limitations.

PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.

	Strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
1. Whole School Evaluation increases the workload of educators	1	2	3	4	5
2. Whole School Evaluation is an administrative burden	1	2	3	4	5
3. Whole School Evaluation is the same as an inspection	1	2	3	4	5
4. Whole School Evaluation is subjective form of evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
5. Whole School Evaluation makes use of one set of indicators for all contexts thus benefiting the more resourced schools	1	2	3	4	5
6. Principals lack expertise of and experience in conducting self-evaluation of the school	1	2	3	4	5
7. Whole School Evaluation creates anxiety and stress amongst educators	1	2	3	4	5
8. A maximum of a 4-day evaluation by external examiners is insufficient to accurately determine the effectiveness of a school.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Educators are involved in rigorous preparations only for the duration of the evaluation and not after	1	2	3	4	5

PART G

PLEASE READ EACH OF THE STATEMENTS BELOW AND PLACE A CROSS ON THE NUMBER OF THE RESPONSE YOU CONSIDER MOST APPROPRIATE.

Whole School Evaluation:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. creates opportunity for feedback to educators.	1	2	3	4	5
2. creates opportunity for feedback to parents about the school's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
3. promotes the need for a school development plan.	1	2	3	4	5
4. calls for district offices to actively support schools.	1	2	3	4	5
5. has been introduced because of poor matric results.	1	2	3	4	5
6. is an attempt by the department to make dysfunctional schools effective.	1	2	3	4	5

PART H

SEVERAL PEOPLE ARGUE THAT WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION IS DEVELOPMENTAL RATHER THAN JUDGEMENTAL. PLACE A CROSS (X) ON THE NUMBER OF THE RESPONSE YOU CONSIDER MOST APPROPRIATE.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1..Whole school evaluation will enable the school to establish its weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
2. The school development plan will focus on areas in which training is to take place	1	2	3	4	5
3. District and provincial offices will provide constant support.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Systemic evaluation results will compliment Whole School Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
5.. Whole School Evaluation encourages me to intensify my preparations for teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	5

**APPENDIX P
CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ON THE SCHOOL
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL VISIT**

The observation checklist will be used in order to collect contextual information on the school for the purpose of compiling the school profile and providing the reader with a thick rich description of the case study school.

To be completed by the researcher/teachers in the school

PLEASE FILL IN OR PLACE A TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN

1. Type of building

1. Building designed as school	
2. Prefab	
3. Teacher training college	
4. Other (specify)	

2. School building

1. Number of blocks	
2. Number of storeys	

3. Condition of school and furniture

	Type of structure: Specify (e.g., brick wall, tile roof, etc)	No maintenance needed	Need maintenance	Need maintenance & structural repair	Beyond repair
1. Roof					
2. Windows					
3. Doors					
4. Walls					
5. Furniture					
6. Floors					
7. Toilets					
8. Ceilings	Fitted	Not fitted			
9. Other (specify)					

4. Number of toilets for teaching/administrative staff

1. Male staff	
2. Female staff	
3. Out of order	

5. Number of toilets for learners

1. Males	
2. Females	
3. Out of order	

6. Power and energy supply

1. Wired & supplied with electricity	
2. Wired but not supplied with electricity	
3. Not wired and/or & no electricity available	
4. Generators	
5. Other (specify)	

7. Overall condition of building

Very weak (not suitable for occupation)	Weak (structure needs attention)	Needs paint & minor repairs	Good condition	Excellent, no foreseeable repairs

8. Safety

1. Building is completely fenced with security at the entrance	
2. Building is completely fenced without security at the entrance	
3. Building has been fenced but fence is damaged	
4. No fence	
5. Other (specify)	

9. Office space

	Adequate	Inadequate	None	Estimated shortfall number
1. Offices for management				
2. Offices for admin staff				

APPENDIX Q

CONTACT SUMMARY FORM

Contact type:

Visit _____

Site: _____

Phone: _____ (with whom)

Contact date: _____

Written by: _____

Today's date: _____

1. With whom did you meet?
2. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?
3. Summarize the information that you got (or failed to get) on each of the target questions you had for this contact?
4. Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating or important in this contact?
5. What new (or remaining) target questions do you have in considering the next contact with this site?

CONCERNS OF THE RESEARCHER:

APPENDIX R

DOCUMENT SUMMARY FORM

Site: _____

Document number: _____

Date received or picked up: _____

NAME OR DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT:

EVENT OR CONTACT, IF ANY, WITH WHICH DOCUMENT IS ASSOCIATED:

Date:

SIGNIFICANCE OR IMPORTANCE OF DOCUMENT:

BRIEF SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:

Note: If document is central or crucial to a particular contact (e.g., a meeting agenda discussed in an interview, etc) make a copy and include with write-up. Otherwise put in document file.