Chapter Four

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION
Complexities and Dynamics of Education Policy Change and Teachers' Experiences

4. 1   Introduction

The previous chapter presented and justified the adopted methodology in terms of the research problem and the literature review. Data gathering and data analysis processes were described, which should enable another researcher to replicate the research. Chapter Five will deal with the significance of the discussion and some probable implications of this inquiry.

This chapter presents significant patterns of themes relevant to the research question, which I have elicited from the empirical data. Identifiable units of meaning constitute theme accounts that are grouped according to larger units or major stages of experiences and understandings. Where the words of teachers are quoted verbatim (presented in italic type), no attempt has been made to correct their language usage. Some Afrikaans quotations are also cited.

Four emerging themes have been elicited from the data analysis and some interpretations are presented regarding the experiences of teachers, including how

these could affect educational practice. Data are discussed and contextualised in the light of selected educational policies intended for educational change in South Africa. The four main themes identified are:

- the emotional dimensions of policy change,
- discipline and control,
- outcomes-based education (OBE), and
- teachers' roles and professionalism.

Each theme has a number of sub-themes, which will be analysed separately. A brief summary of the categorised themes is given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1   Summary of the main themes and sub-themes

MAIN THEMES	SUB THEMES (specific aspects of the themes)
1. Education policy change and the affective domain: emotional responses and contestations	• Assumptive worlds and perceptions of policy change • Resistance to education policy change • Reluctance from experienced teachers • Optimism as part of personality • Top-down imposition of policy • Relevance of lifelong learning • Lack of resources and funding • Low morale of teachers • Unsupportive conditions at work • Teacher stress and burnout • Isolation, fear and loss of faith in the system
2. Discipline and teacher control	• Teacher discipline and self-control • Corporal punishment • Learner discipline and non-participation
3. Curriculum policy change: outcomes-based education	• Discrepancies between policy intentions and teachers' experiences • Further training and professional development • Complexity of official document texts • Need for support • Standards and assessment • Group work
4. Values: teacher roles and professionalism	• Teacher perceptions and conceptions • Teachers' roles: receivers or developers of curriculum • Identity of self and professional needs • Competition and rivalry

4.2 Education policy change and affective dimensions: emotional responses and contestations

A leading theme elicited from the raw data analysis comprises various emotional responses and cognitive constructed contestations of education policy change. The mere fact that the emotional dimension emerged so distinctly shows clearly that it cannot be ignored. Cognition cannot be fully grasped without recognising the emotions and feelings that drive and shape them (cf. Fineman, 1993:1). Unfortunately, though, "relatively few theoreticians dealing with the epistemological issues in education underscore the importance of feeling as a source of knowing" (cf. Eisner, 1998:115). Also, "emotions are virtually absent from the literature and advocacy of educational change … it is as if teachers think and act; but never really feel" (Hargreaves, 1998:559).

4.2.1 Resistance to education policy change

Education policy change, according to March (1991:2), is in the eye of the beholder and if the beholder has initiated the policy change then it probably is seen as logical, rational and well thought out. If, however, the beholder sees policy change as illogical, irrational and improperly conceived, more than likely these changes will be resisted, either implicitly or explicitly. In the educational field, resistance comes mostly from teachers for whom the change has the greatest impact. If it feels threatening – particularly when it affronts deeply-embedded assumptions about the interaction of education, power, culture, and society – then conflict may arise between those who make policy change happen and those who resist it. The following section focuses on the analysis of teachers' resistance to education policy change.

Resistance to change, in one form or another, is a common theme in education (Germinario & Cram, 1998:183ff). While not unique to educational organisations, resistance to educational change manifests most frequently in relation to change in policy text and/or curriculum innovations. According to Fink and Stoll (1998:299),

"resistance is a natural and predictable response." Participant Three (P3) (3:55 574:583)[7] summarises this as follows:

> *If you say to teachers you would like to implement this ... 99% of the people are not going to do it because people do resist change, because it means a lot of hard work and so granted, so maybe they have to push you into a direction and secretly maybe they hope that we do put our own stamp on it and do things that work for us.*

Resistance to change is mostly an effort to maintain the status quo, which is seen as more comfortable than an unknown future brought about by some unasked-for policy change process. Needless to add, one of the strongest human motives is the drive toward homeostasis (cf. Nolan, Goodstein & Pfeiffer, 1993). There are numerous reasons for resistance to change: for example, fear of the unknown, fear of failure in a new situation, preference for the present situation, lack of confidence, different perspectives of problems, wrong timing of policy change announcements, and fear of loss of status, rights and privileges.

Empirical data revealed that some teachers fear change: "*it* [policy change] *instils more fear, more fear...*" (P4 4:41 564-578). In addition to the anxiety of change, the new political context that faces teachers adds to this fearfulness and subsequent resistance. Political reactions to policy change may relate to fear of loss of rights, status and privileges. P4 (4:14 148-159) expresses her views on the politically-driven changes in this country and concludes that they were necessary. She does, however, raise some concerns of uncertainty:

> *I can understand and I really have a compassion for that, that. a policy change was needed to include people who could have been formerly excluded from certain things and I can see that with a new government ... I don't know though, a whole new system that we are going to face as far as teaching is concerned...?*

Another factor worthy of note is mentioned by P5 (5:34 533-541):

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[7] P3 refers to the third interview (as P3 in the Atlas.ti programme), 3:55 refers to code 55 in the third interview, and the subsequent numerals refer to the line numbers of the verbatim quotation. This pattern is followed throughout.

Met ander woorde jy kan nie in jou eie politieke oortuiging kan jy nie in jou onderwys situasie waarin' jy is, kan jy nie op die voorgrond plaas nie. Jy moet heeltemal op die agtergrond wees omdat jy 'n diens lewer. Ja en jy moet in jou gemeenskap diens lewer en dit is mense met verskillende politieke oortuigings....

This response may appear submissive; however, it depicts the mandate of politics and policy in education. Not only does policy change raise concerns and anxieties, but it is also perceived as being done *to* the recipients of policy, because most teachers were not involved in the planning stage. That is why policy change that elicits negative reactions is usually perceived as forced upon people rather than negotiated. P6 (6:16 75-76) comments in this regard that *"those who do not participate in the planning [of policy change] have problems implementing change"*. Put differently, those policy changes which people feel they had no hand in developing, bring forth specially negative and uncomfortable emotions. Thus, the role of perceptions and teacher non-participation in policy processes cannot be ignored.

Another and somewhat different viewpoint of the resistance debate comes from Winslow and Solomon (1993:75-88), who suggest that "there is no such thing as resistance to change." They believe that people do not resist the policy change *per se*, but rather the perceived outcomes of the policy change, such as *"hard work"* (cf. P3 3:55 574-583) and *"discomfort"* (cf. P4 4:31 428:437). They argue that people resist their fantasies of punishment and/or danger, the perceived outcome of the change. They describe intelligent, competent, experienced (cf. 4.2.2) and normal people becoming stodgy, conservative, foot-dragging, sluggish, disruptive and even disobedient. For the most part, humans tend to live in the future, in that they make decisions in the present based on their perceptions of the implications for future outcomes.

Furthermore, Corey (1995:106-107) cautions that unless resistant behaviour is recognised and explored it can seriously interfere with organisational processes. It is not something that can be easily overcome since it is an integral part of defensive

approaches to life. Often it is precisely the protection from anxiety that causes resistant behaviour, which is evident from our teachers' responses. Worthy of note is the direct correlation between resistant and anxious behaviour, which can facilitate nuanced understanding of education policy change. Also, some teachers may show an unwillingness to co-operate (rather than overt resistance) when they sense perceived unqualified leadership, lack of trust or political issues. This became particularly evident during the discussion about OBE implementation (cf. also section 4.3).

Teachers trust neither policy nor implementation processes, hence their reluctance and resistance to co-operate – for example, information regarding OBE workshop meetings were late. Others attended some OBE workshops and found them limiting in language and not substantive enough. P1 (1:4 33-36) comments as follows:

> *That is all basically that we have been made aware of at this stage, is this whole OBE type education. But very little information coming through to us.*

P4 (4:11 114-120) talks about the language issue:

> *I think the other problem is of course a language barrier, not in the sense that, they spoke English, but because they, English to them might be a third or a fourth language.*

P2 (2:50 280-284) also expresses some political mistrust:

> *So I just feel that you cannot throw something out. What they did was they disbanded the old regime, well everything to do with old regime to go and it has to go immediately, that was the error.*

P4 (4:1 16-26) also shows some political reservations:

> *I must admit that in the beginning when I first heard about the 2005 and the OBE situation, I was not very partial to that, because I just thought that it was just a new gimmick, that they were, you know they had to do something different just to get away from old political sort of habits and stuff like that, so I was not very partial to that.*

These reflections allude to curriculum policy change, which may impede the implementation process. More often than not teachers do not have the opportunity to express their anxieties or to raise their concerns regarding the change. That is why their resistance and reluctance to fully participate in policy implementation may flaw the process. Fullan (1991:29 citing Cuban, 1988:343) supports this: "Most reforms foundered on the rocks of flawed implementation. Many were diverted by the quiet but persistent resistance of teachers…. The ingredients change, the Chinese saying goes, but the soup remains the same."

4.2.2 Reluctance of experienced teachers

Experienced teachers have their own unique understanding of education policy change. Empirical data, which can be supported by the work of Sikes (1992), show that experienced teachers present their resistance in unique ways. Many have been teaching for many years and have developed their own ways of doing things – *"old recipes work"* (P1 1:22 144-151) – which are fitting in their situations. Based on the hard data, teachers are *"principally"* reluctant to abandon tried and tested methods for new ones, which they may be afraid, will fail. P1 (1:22 144-151) shares her viewpoint:

> *I must say your older staff feels very threatened always. They feel that they have a recipe that works and so on.*

She (1:75 381-385) also states:

> *So suddenly for somebody like me I mean I have been teaching for ten years, to suddenly be told you know ten years in private education that from now onwards you will behave according to this set piece of paper.*

P5 (5:21 291-300) adds another dimension to this discussion:

> *Dit het gewerk in die verlede, hulle het sukses daarmee behaal en om hulle uit daardie patroon te kry van dit waaraan ek gewoond is, dit*

wat vir my goed gewerk het, om vir hulle daardie paradigma skuif te laat maak, want daar is tog 'n ander manier wat dalk kan beter kan werk vir die leerders, dink ek is vir party ouens is dit moeilik om te kan doen.

If experience is equated with being better qualified, then the comment by P2 (2:45 252-259) is appropriate:

I actually believe that it [OBE] widens the gap, because your better teachers, you know your superior teachers can have an absolute ball, which means your independent school teachers, your teachers that are better qualified, that have better experience, know about lateral thinking, can actually, they know where to hold on to syllabus, when to.

Teaching experience can also be defined differently in that some may see it as doing the same thing for many years, while others may see it as doing something different in a shorter period of time. P2 (2:67 394-397) expresses her concern with doing more of the same in education:

You know some teachers will use it as a compliment to themselves that they are doing exactly the same thing as they did 20 years ago.

This relates to teachers, who doubt their own ability to learn new approaches and methods. They fear that they will have to learn too many new things. Hence, they will have to work harder and consequently resist the policy change process so much the more. These experienced teachers have seniority by virtue of their age and can have considerable influence on younger and junior staff. Also, although policy change is legally enforced it is possible to go through the motions and present an appearance of change without any real policy change implementation taking place (cf. P3 3:55 574-583). Needless to add that policy change can be overtly or covertly sabotaged by doing things wrong or by blatantly refusing to co-operate, which clearly correlates with the notion of resistance. Younger teachers tend to show more enthusiasm and commitment to change than older staff, although they lack the skills and expertise that is necessary (cf. Sikes, 1992:47ff). The older, more experienced

staff are more resistant to change and less likely to believe that policy change will work. Interview data reveals that *"a lot of your younger staff are quite keen"* (P1 1:22 144-151).

Furthermore, policy change implies replacing something old with something new and perhaps questionable, taking into account where the motivation lies for the change. P2 (2: 51/52 280-293) elaborates on this thought:

> *Therefore, I just feel that you cannot throw something out. What they did was they disbanded the old regime, well everything to do with old regime to go and it has to go immediately, that was the error. ...but they threw things out and tried to implement something and then afterwards sort of realised, gee, this is not working, but as I say your guy who walks into classroom and does things a certain way, is going to carry on doing it.*

To sum up this section, Hargreaves (1991:249) renders a pertinent thought:

> ...in mid-to late career, if they [teachers] have not been promoted out of the classroom, or become disenchanted and disengaged by dispiriting conditions, blocked careers and lack of recognition, teachers are still committed to change and improvement, but on a more modest and gradualistic scale within their own classrooms that they can control. [They are] unlikely to invest fashionable innovations with unmitigated enthusiasm, especially when they have seen so many come and go in the past.

4.2.3 Optimism as part of personality

Not only do teachers' perceptions, experiences and age impact on policy change, but their personalities also play a vital role. The personality of the teacher can add value to the contextual understanding of policy change practice. Evidently some teachers are naturally optimistic or feel challenged, while others are less hopeful and do not respond from a strength perspective.

The data revealed that some teachers are more excited than others are, feel challenged by the change initiatives, and can make change their own (P3 3:18/19 116-123). Others feel they have been *"thrown into the deep end"* of things (P3 3:35 255-258) and *"cope less well"*. Also, teachers with less confidence in their abilities are not willing to innovate, and new and strange things constitute a threat to their competence. This relates to what Huberman (1973:47) depicts as a "fear of failure", which makes teachers more resistant to new practices than other professionals.

Teachers' personalities may influence resistance in the manner with which they deal with the pressure of change. Resistance to change and the role of personality is a clinical and a psychological debate (cf. also Kübler Ross, 1995, 1997, and Corey, 1995) which certainly falls beyond the delimitation of this inquiry. I have, however, alluded to some of these aspects as they emerged from the data because such insights add value to this discussion. For example and without a detailed analysis, personality forces of resistance such as homeostasis, habit, selective perception and retention, dependence, superego, self-distrust, insecurity and regression certainly affect the education policy change practice.

4.2.4   Top-down imposition of policy

As argued earlier, the type of personality, age and the level of educational experience appear to play an important role in policy change. In addition to these psychological manifestations influencing the policy change process, the *manner* in which policy change has been introduced often also elicits intense resistance. This could refer to the timing of a policy change announcement, or to the method and approach with which policy change is brought forward. Responses from this inquiry show that *imposed* policy change evoke more resistance than negotiated policy change.

P1 (1:91 494-498) explains that if policy *"feels imposed"* it leads to resistance. Huberman (1973:45) supports this view and remarks that if policy change is viewed as an imposition, people react defensively and regress (cf. Corey, 1995) to former practices, often secretly. Teachers may suggest that policy changes have indeed been implemented or are taking place, but in reality, the gap between rhetoric and practice

is wide, as discussed earlier. Mostly it is a matter of "business as usual" in the classroom despite legally imposed policy.

Imposition of education policy change often elicits some form of criticism, which inevitably colours teachers' perceptions and ensuing responses (cf. Sikes, 1992). Imposed and forced education policy change implies an official authority, which may challenge the professional experience and expertise of teachers. This challenge or the perceived confrontation is viewed with greater disfavour by older, experienced staff.

In addition to the imposition of policy, inconsistency on the part of the authorities does not enrich educational processes. One needs to bear in mind that implementing a new curriculum as part of policy text necessitates an extraordinary amount of work in order to do it properly (P2 2:69 418-420). It is also reasoned that education policy change should be thoroughly researched *prior* to implementation (P6 6:36 128-129). P3 (3:32 199-214) comments that the manner in which OBE through Curriculum 2005 has been phased in is unconducive and counterproductive:

> *You know I find it quite silly because they take grade 1, this year, it is just grade 1. Why not bring in the grade 2s before we, you know bring in your junior phase and say all the teachers that can come so that it gives you a bit of background, you know where those kids are coming from.*

Moreover,

> *..unfortunately it* [curriculum change] *is something that we have mostly heard of and I have seen very little implementation in the school or in the classroom of that* (P4 4:4 46-50)

Apart from being "*thrown into the deep end*" (P3 3:35 255-258), policy change implementation also depends on the response of the principal:

*It also depends on your principal .... and what does your principal
expect? We are lucky our principal does also resist change you know,
to the extent he says you do not throw away what works for you, you
carry on with that, you add to it* (P3 3:56 590-595).

This notion of resistance emerges in various layers in the change process by experienced teachers, through reluctance due to political undercurrents and personal objections to that, and also leadership participation and imposition of policy change.

4.2.5   The relevance of lifelong learning

This resistance to new practices also often relates to self-development and professional growth within the context of coping and dealing with education policy change. Not only can further training and education add to the well-being of the teachers, but it also enhances their self-concept, which in turn facilitates greater openness towards education policy change simply because their "characters" are not attacked. If, however, teachers have poorly developed ego boundaries or senses of self, they fear what they perceive to be an "invasion" when faced with policy changes (cf. Hargreaves, 1991:251). These feelings of personal violations or infringements may well be perpetuated if no further education or training is undergone, since their former education seems somewhat irrelevant for the current educational practices:

*... in the 12 years that I have been with my school very few of my
colleagues have involved themselves in further studies. I am of the
opinion that a qualification obtained 20 and 30 years ago, without
any upgrading of any sort, can really not be very relevant, especially
in the changes that we are facing today..* (P 4 4:41 564-578).

Lifelong learning, particularly during our current transition in education, is inevitable and ultimately necessary if teachers want to stay in touch with reality. Not only does the global information explosion require continuous learning, but lifelong learning also adds to a sense of competence and self-esteem that enhances one's confidence. Teachers with less confidence in their abilities are usually less willing to try out

policy changes. This relates to the earlier argument of the "fear of failure", which causes even more resistance to the education policy change process.

The issue of further lifelong training relates closely to teachers' view of self as learner or not. If they see themselves as learners, they will probably work towards new understanding and improving their educational practices. Thus, according to Molinaro and Drake (1998) "the willingness and a commitment on the part of teachers to learn is a foundation for continuous improvement."

Lastly, Huberman (1973) explains that teacher attitudes and their responses in terms of behaviour are functions both of their personalities and the institutions in which they work. In education, policy change calls to people – that is, the teachers – to alter their way of looking at things and their habits of dealing with their learners. This process is usually quite slow and if pressed too strongly it often builds up greater opposition and resistance. The following section deals with constraints, which significantly impact the policy change process; teachers may have little or no influence, yet be fully dependent on structural support.

4.2.6 Lack of resources and funding

Structural obstacles and resistance to change usually relate to the lack of resources. Some teachers who resist innovation and policy change or who oppose curriculum integration do not do so simply because they are afraid of change, but often because they feel that their interests, their resources and their time are threatened (cf. Hargreaves, 1991:251).

Lack of time as a resource, especially when the curriculum is changed, brings about feelings of desperation. Many teachers cannot keep up, and simply have little or no personal time left; in fact, there appears never to be enough time to implement something new in detail (P3 3:50 457-470). Teacher P5 (5:22 304-314) describes her predicament:

... hierdie is 'n groot werkslading, dit is baie tyd, dit is baie ure wat daarin gesit moet word; dit is baie toewyding, ek moet gaan sit en beplan, ek moet my assessering doen, ek het baie tyd nodig om dit te doen, om by al daardie dinge by te hou, om by 'n buitemuurse program by te hou dink ek is dit partykeer moeilik ook. ...

So die aanvanklike oordra van 'n nuwe ding is vir personeel, veral ouens wat lank skoolhou, is vir hulle 'n vreemde ervaring. Onmiddellik sê hulle dit is te veel werk, dit is te veel vorms, dit is te veel. (P5 5:45 864-869)

Any policy change initiative needs time. Firstly, teachers need time to learn about the new policy and what is expected from them to implement it. Secondly, time is needed to introduce and implement the new policies in terms of teaching strategies. Lastly, time for reflection is needed as the outcomes are assessed. From the empirical material, it is evident that during these three phases teachers do experience various different feelings and emotions and hold different viewpoints.

Insufficient time can be detrimental to educational practice, since teachers can only do so much and no more. They need time to accept and to adapt to policy change, particularly when it relates to change in teaching through a new curriculum.

... What about your poor person on the platteland *that has got a two-year training? They do not have equipment. You can talk about a cow once and then you can go to chickens... Further than that...? They say use your natural resources.... That is fine and fair enough, but there are other things that children have to learn that are not natural resources and how do these poor people tackle this whole thing? I am just very, very concerned that we are going to end up in a couple of years' time with a whole lot of illiterate people that have gone through school* (P3 3:42 344-359).

Christie (1999:290) agrees with the former reflection:

It could be safely predicted that the majority of schools would struggle with this welter of new policy directions ... [and] better resourced, historically privileged schools are more likely to be able to manage new policies than historically disadvantaged, mainly black

schools, and particularly the poor, rural and marginalised among them.

Resistance to education policy change is a complex human process, involving emotional and cognitive dynamics as well as practical, managerial, and structural constraints. These issues attempt to maintain the status quo as teachers are caught up in the rush of attempted change, and more often than not, they cannot cope. Christie (1999:290) advises that "...educational transformation cannot be delivered by democratic elections and policy visions alone. They need to be won in concerted engagement with social, political and economic forces, in which the development of new policies is simply one task."

The following sections deals with the low morale of teachers, which relates closely to resistance to policy change. Low morale reflects both emotional and mental attitudes, which may induce and perpetuate feelings of resistance. In this context Boyd-Dimrock (1992) reports that there is little doubt that teachers' attitudes impact on educational practice through their behaviour in implementing or resisting education policy change.

4.2.7   Low morale of teachers

The concept of morale, according to Lumsden (1998:1), refers to a feeling, a state of mind, a mental attitude, and an emotional attitude. This includes a perception of self within a work context, and the extent to which the organisation is viewed as meeting the employee's needs and expectations.

The morale of an organisation is an intangible element composed of the feelings and attitudes of individuals and groups. However, the effects of morale include tangible and important issues such as outcomes, efficiency, quality, and productivity. Low morale is costly in terms of lost productivity and inefficiency. Often low morale is seen in mysterious and unpredictable terms.

This theme of teachers' low morale as an effect of education policy change emerged prominently from the empirical data. P1 (1:46 258-259) declares in rather general terms, *"Well at the moment in education, morale is very low"*. She elaborates (1:48 263-264) by stating, *"I think it boils down to the fear of the unknown, we do not know what is coming"*. P2 (2:107 684-685) supports this view: *"I would say [the morale is] quite low, you know very low in fact"*. So much so, she acknowledges, that *"...it has broken teachers down a lot..."* (2:116 714-717). A variety of issues were mentioned, some relating to actual policies which perpetuate the low morale, and others relating to emotional dimensions such as fear of and anxiety about education policy change. In particular, uncertainties relating to the insecurity of teaching jobs, redeployment and the fear of the unknown contributed to the low morale of teachers.

As mentioned earlier, evidence of low morale amongst teachers is visible in tangible outcomes such as frustration, depression and discontent. It may be worse (P2 2:116 714-717), since they experience the new demands of policy change as inhuman:

> *I think that half the teachers are on antidepressants or you know I think the demand that has been put on teachers is almost inhuman. We work incredibly long hours. Okay, it is all financial, the classes are getting bigger because of finances and there is an incredible amount of red tape involved in the whole thing... teachers are burning out and it is not a good thing. I think we have lost the cream of the crop because they do not want to work for the salary. If I work the amount of hours that I do in the private sector, I would be earning a lot more money and education is not about money. You cannot educate children for money. You do it because you love what you are doing (P3 3:69 774-789).*

Low morale amongst teacher is also due to the lack of communication on what policy should do and how it should be implemented – in other words, there is a top-down approach. This in turns leads to diverse interpretations of the same policy text or document on a terrain that is already contested, and induces further frustration amongst teachers since there does not seem to be consensus or a negotiated point of departure:

*...the morale is low, due to different interpretations of the same policy
and they are unsure of what is expected from them and due to lack of
support...* " (P6 6:63 198-201).

This view contrasts good policy implementation planning, which can actually boost
morale: *"If education policy change is well planned, the teachers' morale can be
strengthened"* (P6 6:57 190-191). Apart from the frustrations and inhuman demands
on teachers, their low morale deteriorates because of unsupportive work conditions.
Within the changing and unsupportive context some teachers have lost their sense of
achievement or accomplishment (P2 2:93 546-549).

4.2.8   Unsupportive conditions at work

Unfortunately and broadly speaking, education policy change is not experienced as
well-planned or well-supported. On the contrary, conditions in educational practice
are unsustained or unsupported. Some teachers feel stretched to the limit.
Expectations placed on them are expanding exponentially. Pressures include
inadequate books and supplies, large and overcrowded classrooms, disruptive
learners, limited assistance, increased duties and low salaries (cf. also Addenda I and
J).

Lack of funding, inadequate books and resources and overcrowded classrooms are
certainly issues that teachers have to deal with daily (cf. P3 3:42 344-359).
Overcrowding in the classroom in an unsupportive school context leads to
disciplinary problems, exacerbated by the abolition of corporal punishment (cf. P3
3:58 618-623). These crucial issues influence the morale of teachers, as discussed in
the previous section. The experiences of the abolition of corporal punishment will be
dealt with later under the main theme of discipline and teacher control (see section
4.3).

4.2.9   Teacher stress and burnout

In addition to the unsupportive work conditions and the abolition of corporal punishment, some teacher respondents felt exceptionally stressed and expressed their concerns about these feelings. Of course, this relates closely to the notion of low morale, which I discussed earlier. Not only does too much stress intensify and aggravate the low morale, but it also results in emotional and physical fatigue and in reduction of work motivation, involvement, and satisfaction. Excessively stressed teachers lose their idealism, sense of purpose, and their enthusiasm (cf. Lumsden, 1998:2), which certainly raises concern. P1 (1:50 273-277) explains:

> *It becomes visible in, well from what I have actually seen, lack of enthusiasm. I am not going to do more than what I have to do, attitude. Also almost an attitude of, well I better be careful here because this one could actually determine my job, if you know what I am saying.*

The effects are unfortunate. Low morale also leads to decreased teacher productivity and burnout, which is associated with a loss concern, loss of care, and detachment from the people with whom they work. This leads to a further decrease in teaching quality, depression, greater use of sick leave, and lastly a cynical and dehumanised perception of learners. The end result is demoralised teachers and poor student achievement.

Feelings of stress sometimes accumulate merely because teachers are ill-informed and do not know what is expected of them:

> *We do not know what is going to be expected, you know it is because you are uninformed. Also you are hearing again perceptions from other schools of what is happening and that causes you know immense, an unconscious form of stress.."* (P1 1:49 264-268).

Another important dimension relating to the disturbing levels of teacher stress concerns the changing context of HIV/AIDS in the classrooms. P3 (3:76 886-912) provides some explanation:

You know and another thing that is a great concern to and it is not happening right now, but within the next five years it is going to happen, is this whole AIDS issue. It is horrifying and how is that going to affect a teacher? We went to that seminar and he says you know how many teachers are going to get AIDS in the next couple of years? So not only is my child not safe in a class, but I as a teacher am not safe in a class. Are we being educated in that? How do we handle that? You are going to get a child coming to you, I am talking about little children, coming to you that has fallen and he is bleeding all over and you say: hang on there and you are going to run to your cupboard and you are going to put your gloves on and whatever you need and then you may attend to the child. You know what is that going to do to our whole society? I think a lot of our problems stem from the country because our children are being traumatised one way or another, parents are very, very busy, teachers are very busy, which causes stress, which causes explosive situations, which causes unhappiness and so it is not just in the education, it is the whole country; it is very, very wide. But the AIDS business, how are children going to relate to each other?

This evidence of feelings of stress becomes visible through the lack of enthusiasm and inspiration (P1 1:50 273-277). To illustrate, when teachers experience a lot of pressure they become irascible with their learners and feel rather tense (P1 1:54,64 290-329). The following section discusses the range of feelings experienced and what the probable implications may be.

4.2.10 Isolation, fear and loss of faith in the system

In earlier sections, it became apparent that education policy change evokes a variety of feelings and emotions, ranging from slight concerns to anxiety, threat, fear, and from time to time also excitement. Education policy change can been associated with a divergence of feelings and emotions, mostly uncomfortable according to Webb and Ashton (1987:22-40):

Alienation, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, professional isolation, discouragement, feelings of ineffectiveness, not consulted, sense of powerlessness, lack of recognition, no care / not cared for, frustration, depersonalised, detachment, and loss of connection that reinforces a negative professional self-image.

These are evident from the hard empirical data, possibly also because ultimately *"people are passionate about education"* (cf. P2 2:36 207-209).

In addition to the "passionate" stance to policy change, Paul (1993:102ff) provides another interesting and relevant viewpoint concerning policy change and the emotional lives of teachers. He refers to the intimate relationship that people have with their minds and describes the mind in three functions – thinking, feeling and wanting. The process of feeling monitors meanings of events, such as evaluating positive and negative events. The process of wanting drives or moves people to act. The process of thinking creates meaning, that is, a process of making sense of events in our lives. These processes are interrelated – for example; when we think we are threatened, we feel fear and then want to flee or attack. It is important to recognise essentially how the thinking process proceeds – that is, how teachers think about, interpret or mediate policy change, and how this influences subsequent feelings and consequently their behaviour.

For the most part, education policy change is prone to some resistance, particular concerning its implementation. Such emotional resistance becomes visible through intransigence, an unwillingness to co-operate, entrenchment, or fearfulness. P4 (4:29 399-407) describes how she sees the fear of failure:

> *They are not willing to make mistakes because they live in this fear*
> *that in that small little world of theirs there is perhaps a little black*
> *mark that is going to appear against their name or a demarcation of*
> *any sort or something and they are not willing to take chances.*

Among such habits, routines and familiar procedures, change is often apperceived or encountered as a loss (cf. Kübler-Ross, 1969:235). Although teachers may rationally support new ideas, this understanding does not imply that they do not have fear. Gultig and Butler (1999:116) explain that fears are evoked basically by uncertainty about what is required or expected.

What is more, teachers are expected to give up their ways of thinking and implementing education policy with which they have become comfortable. Thus, although teachers may "know" and understand that policy change is necessary and appropriate, their emotional response may still be one of resistance. Teachers do not change as a result of new information. On the contrary, new policy in the form of a new curriculum (such as Curriculum 2005), given out in a context where teachers are insecure about their own abilities and their future, may indeed retard the policy change process. This resonates with P2's (2:53 288-298) reflection:

> *...but they threw things out and tried to implement something and then afterwards sort of realised gee this is not working, but as I say your guy who walks into a classroom and does things a certain way, is going to carry on doing it. You know, and he is going to look at that piece of paper, he is going to go to a workshop and say: yes, yes it very nice, and do exactly as he pleases.*

Feelings of ineffectiveness and discouragement may bring about ineffective policy implementation. The knowledge that a new curriculum requires new training and resources to implement, and that it promises to increase their workload, may also result in additional resistance, despite the fact that they realise how "good" Curriculum 2005 may be. Fink and Stoll (1998:299) describe this vividly:

> With the best will in the world, teachers who have been bombarded by an unrelenting plethora of [policy] changes over a short time period tend to be exhausted, and find it hard to keep up their energy, enthusiasm and, ultimately, willingness for change. It is, therefore, not necessarily the characteristics of teachers, *per se*, that cause resistance and the continuity it perpetuates, but the pressures on them and the limits placed on their involvement in making the decision to change.

Furthermore, policy implementation relies on teachers' participation, commitment and positive attitude. Responses from teachers often reflect the opposite, evidenced by lack of enthusiasm, a slack attitude and resistance to the proposed change. P1 illustrates this (1:50 273-277):

> *It becomes visible in, well from what I have actually seen, lack of*

enthusiasm. I am not going to do more than what I have to do attitude.

Feelings of fear and a loss of faith in a new system may lead to an increased resistance in this process. Teachers' fears and frustrations are often expressed in statements like "our old methods worked perfectly well" (cf. Gultig & Butler, 1999:101), as they attempt to maintain the status quo.

There are also other fears that relate to consequences of education policy change. Many teachers are worried about losing their posts due to redeployment strategies. Not only is policy on redeployment viewed as idealistic, but it has also created tremendous insecurity and uncertainty amongst teachers:

> *I think that redeployment is idealistic, but look I agree with it, on paper it is fine, but you cannot tell somebody with a family, that tomorrow they are going to be teaching in Hammanskraal (P2 2:23 126-133).*

According to Hartshorne (1999:116), the Western Cape and Gauteng needed to redeploy or retrench teachers. He states that in the six months before December 1996, 11 792 teachers accepted severance packages at a cost of approximately R778 million. P4 (4:40 551-564) describes this in her own words:

> *I think for white people and having lived in a country that has definitely favoured them and secured their jobs for them, I think because we are also apart from your own protected little environment, you in a way ... many of them are linked with friends and family that have been, you know the victims of people that have lost their jobs, who have been forced out of positions...*

Many teachers have indeed left the profession, and others who are still in the system find it too difficult to cope with their sense of powerlessness about their future:

> *...there are times when you think what is going to be happening in five years' time, how are things going to be ... am I going to be able to cope with what is going to happen* (P1 1:69,70 349-353).

These future scenarios and the pace of policy change are often overwhelming. Education change appears to be *snowballing* and teachers cannot keep up:

> *I feel strongly that we have got no personal time left and if you do not have personal time you cannot grow. We are like these bulls that race through a tunnel just to get to the end. Education is snowballing, everything is snowballing. You think you have something sorted out and then they throw a whole new issue at you, and there is never enough time to really get stuck into what you are doing ...* (P3 3:50 457-470).

This snowballing in education refers to a heightening and intensification of change processes. If things change too fast in education, often little or no attention is given to laying the proper groundwork for those who will be most affected by these policy changes in order to get adequate commitment and develop a comprehensive implementation plan. "Haste does indeed make waste" – words of caution expressed by Silvernail (1996:60) in his research on the impact of England's national curriculum and assessment system on classroom practice.

As experienced in Britain, rushing the implementation of a national curriculum has lead to "an unmanageable curriculum and an ineffective assessment system" (Silvernail, 1996). In all likelihood, some policy outcomes will be desirable and others will be less desirable, rendering some intended results and some unintended results. An understanding of this complex reality could add value to the South African education policy change processes, in the hope that policy would "move slowly and cautiously with such reforms" (Silvernail, 1996:60).

Policy change in education has lead to intense pressure that has induced a negative self-image amongst many teachers. They feel professionally depersonalised and detached from their earlier *"calling"* and do not experience a sense of connection or belonging:

I think the calling is not there any more because ... they give you nothing, nothing gets back to you.. you work till 23:00, 00:00 at night, some people till 02:00, 03:00 in the morning and you get to school and there is all these little beings that demand something from you and you cannot give any more... (P3 3:70 793-803).

On the one hand, there is the risk of failure and its exposure, which creates anxiety amongst some teachers:

They are not willing to make mistakes because they live in this fear that in that small little world of theirs there is perhaps a little black mark that is going to appear against their name or a demarcation of any sort or something and they are not willing to take chances (P4 4:29 399-407).

On the other hand there are also feelings of acceptance, recognising the necessity for policy change. P4 (4:48 661-673) elaborates:

At this point in time, I have sort of, I have come to terms with certain things. I know what I want in life and I know that in my classroom I am going to bring in the necessary changes and if it is not for the children then even it is for myself, just to know that I still want to do, I still want to participate and then one thing that I feel strongly about, I want to give a child that has been sitting in my classroom the very best.

P4 (4: 49 676-686) not only recognises the need for change, but evidently copes with policy change a little easier than her colleagues:

And I am still curious, I am still trying to find out more about my subject, about ways of teaching. I like to read, I think I pick up things and I try and implement and I am a conscious person, I don't go through life unconsciously. So I pick up things and I see in a newspaper, in a magazine, I think this will make a nice lesson.

I think previously I wanted to change the whole world, to change the whole system. I have given up on that. I am concerning myself with

individuals and every year when I get a new set of pupils I really try
and do the best that I can do for them and that is about the best that I
can do at this point in time (P4 4:53 746-755).

Regarding pupils and classroom practices, P5 (5:46 934-941) describes prevailing feelings of anxiety and resistance that affect the teaching:

> *...die negatiewe een waar hulle vasskop of vasstaan teen 'n*
> *onsekerheid, teen 'n angs, teen moontlike vrees wat dit kan bring, teen*
> *'n oorvol program, teen te min tyd om al die goed af te handel, teen te*
> *veel dokumentasie wat afgehandel moet word.*

These descriptive reflections from the empirical data paint a gloomy picture of education policy change. The following sections deal with specific policy changes such as disciplinary issues and the abolition of corporal punishment. While I am aware of the numerous policy changes (see Addendum K), I was guided by teachers' responses, in that I analysed and discussed only the education policy changes that they presented and shared with me. In some sections, however, I do elaborate a little in order to contextualise their responses.

4.3   Discipline and teacher control

As discussed in Chapter Two, since the Government of National Unity came to power in 1994 a variety of policy documents have been produced. In education, there have been the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), and Curriculum 2005 and its Review (Chisholm, 2000). Policies outlining new principles and procedures for the regulation and professional development of teachers include the Committee on Teacher Education Policy's *Norms and Standards for Teachers* (COTEP, 1998), the South African Council for Educators' *Code of Conduct* (SACE, 1997), the Department of Education's *Duties and Responsibilities of Teachers* (DoE, 1998), and the Education Labour Relations Council's *Manual for Developmental Appraisal* (ELRC, 1997). These policies

describe the *ideal* teacher in terms of roles and the competencies required for these roles (cf. Harley *et al.,* 1999).

4.3.1   Teacher discipline and self-control

The empirical data revealed that most teachers were not aware of many of these policies. When asked to reflect on education policy change they focused on issues pertaining to OBE and Curriculum 2005. Issues regarding professional development were hardly mentioned. Teacher respondents appeared to have little awareness that there were in fact certain policies, which defined their teaching roles, and competencies needed to fulfil these roles. In addition, they were not aware of the symbolic, regulative and procedural functions of these policy documents. Although teachers had little to say about these specific documents, they shared their practical concerns about the impact of curriculum policy change and how this influences discipline in the classroom. In simpler terms, teachers were concerned about how the new curriculum would influence the atmosphere in their classroom and subsequent disciplinary practices.

Teachers expressed deep and real concerns about disciplinary matters. For example, some indicated how they perceived OBE to be a loophole for lazy teachers. P3 stated that:

> ...*that worries me, because your lazy teacher can get away with being lazier, your hard working teacher is going to work harder* (P3 3:16 91-94).

Another teacher expressed it differently:

> *I have picked in my own experience the teacher who you always know who is always ducking and diving, they are always the ones to grab first on something that means less work* (P1 1:22 144-151).

And yet another indicated that

> ... *there are loopholes, your lazy teacher, your insecure teacher can get away with doing nothing...* (P2 2:49 277-280).

Some teachers abuse the perceived freedom and hardly do any work, as P4 explains:

> *...I am coming back to the window dressing. As long as the file and what is in the file and that can be shown on paper, as long as that is in order then the teacher is fairly safe. But what goes on a daily, minute to minute basis in that classroom is sometimes shocking, it is shocking really* (P4 4:43 605-613).

P3 shares another concern that relates to loopholes for the lazy teacher:

> *You see another thing is they say you are the facilitator. Now that is very easy. You give them a bit of information and you walk around, well if you do it properly you are walking around and you are actually observing every single child you know and you make your notes and you say this child is doing this, this, this. But what about the teacher that does not, is not committed? They go and sit behind their desks and do whatever they want to do, you know so the assessment, it can work but we are not all working with the same calibre of teacher and that worries me. If my child ends up in a class where the teacher does not work, what is going to happen to my child? She is not even going to pick up that my child is not working* (P3 3:45 388-403).

Evidently there some teachers who *"try to get away with as little as possible and with as little discomfort to themselves..."* (P4 4:31 428-437).

Asmal (2000b) also found that laziness and lack of teacher discipline are detrimental to educational practice. Teachers' discipline, self-control and professional responsibility are imperative for sound education practices and of course sound policy implementation. Furthermore, many teachers work in unsafe environments, which may lead to slackness and unprofessional behaviour (cf. Asmal, 2000b).

4.3.2   Corporal punishment

With this background in mind and with the abolition of corporal punishment, many teachers felt that they were left without any means of disciplining their learners. It does not stop there, though, for a decline in discipline leads to other problems in the education system. P2 (2:114 692-702) explains her point of view that the decline of

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discipline is dubious, which in her opinion goes hand in hand with lowering of standards:

> *...the breaking down of the discipline structure and the emphasis on rights of individuals, and the rights of children, is actually impacting on the rights of education and in fact I think ultimately the child's primary right is the right to good education...*

Some teachers realised that their disciplining procedures had to change in order to deal with different educational processes in their classroom. However, not all teachers are equipped with such skills. For one thing, teachers feel that the noise levels in their classrooms are problematic. Older staff, for example, often judge a noisy classroom as an undisciplined learning context. Others may enjoy a "busier classroom". It is important that teachers know their pupils well, so that they can judge if and when their pupils can cope with louder and busier classrooms (cf. also Jansen, 1999:203-217). Not all children learn well in such conditions and some are more distracted than in quieter classrooms. Ultimately the teachers need to know their children very well in order to make the most suitable decisions for learning and teaching practices. P3 (3:58 618-623) maintains:

> *You know the discipline goes. Okay we are working, it is now starting to fall into place. You had to change your discipline completely you know, but there is an incredible amount of noise and what worries me is that certain children cannot learn with noise.*

P3 (3:57,60 610-638) elaborates:

> *...I have spoken to some of the government schoolteachers you know and their biggest problem with this whole thing is the discipline, the incredible amount of noise, because it is group work. You know kids can be busy, but well some kids just do not function that way and in actual fact most kids do not function in noise... you have to have a certain amount of peace and quiet to be able to actually absorb what you are doing...*

The decline of discipline, viewed from the empirical data and from related reviewed literature, is a matter of concern. Policy such as the *Duties and Responsibilities for*

Educators DoE, 1998) introduces the importance of the changing role of the teacher and stresses the "shift from control to leadership". The concept of "control" appears a little fuzzy and is certainly underplayed in the policy. Control relates to discipline and even corporal punishment, which is still practised illegally (cf. Harley *et al.*, 1999:194ff). The gap that currently exists between the indecisive policy view of control and the actual practices in classrooms are matters of concern. The abolition of corporal punishment has left many teachers without any means of disciplining pupils, particularly in a changing context where both the processes and the dynamics in their educational practices are quite volatile.

The Minister of Education released a document on alternatives to corporal punishment, *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: The Learning Experience* (Asmal, 2000a), in which he stated:

> Despite its prohibition, we are aware of continuing cases of corporal punishment in schools, which are brought to our attention or reported in the media. This document will therefore assist in helping the teachers to move away from the cane and manage their classes in keeping with our attempts to build a society founded on human rights and recognising the dignity of our children.

4.3.3   Learner discipline and non-participation

Laziness and discipline does not rest only with the teacher. Some pupils will sit back and relax, while the others do their work. This is particularly so in group work (a theme, which I deal with in more depth in section 4.4.6):

> *Your weak one will sit back and let the whole lot do for him and I have noticed, I have done some things that some children actually walk out of a two week cycle or a three week cycle and they have learnt nothing, because they have allowed everybody else to do everything for them* (P3 3:10 41-47).

4.4   Curriculum policy change: outcomes-based education

In the report of the Review Committee on C2005, Chisholm (2000:6ff) suggests that the curriculum should no longer shape and be shaped by narrow visions, concerns and identities, or reproduce the limited interests of a specific group of people at the expense of another group. On the contrary, the curriculum should be inclusive, in that education and training, content and skills, values and knowledge, will be incorporated. While these are noble goals for social and educational change, there is a perception that schools are not assisting in either creating new social values or the skills needed by the population in order to compete globally. It should be acknowledged that education alone (or even a curriculum) could neither change society nor bring about national development. Such optimism in education will lead to great dissatisfaction.

While it is beyond the scope of this inquiry to focus in great depth on the nuances of outcomes-based education, the underlying philosophy for Curriculum 2005, some consideration is befitting. As stated in previous sections, this inquiry deals with education policy change from the perspectives of some primary school teachers. The question was put to them in these broad terms, precisely for the reason that I wanted teachers to explore the education policy change that they selected and preferred to concentrate on. Their focus was mostly on the curriculum policy change, which had an immense influence on their teaching practice. That is why I did not narrow down the question to curriculum policy change in the first place, since education in South Africa was (is) inundated with so many policy changes.

Curriculum 2005 is an enormous, ambitious task that aims amongst many other things to eliminate rote learning and to promote critical thinking and innovative teaching (Coombe, 1997:1-2). While the principles of outcomes-based education were critiqued by many, it was policy makers' thinking that a move away from authoritarian teaching approaches of the past was necessary. Asmal (2000a) in this regard pronounces that there is an "overwhelming support for Outcomes Based Education", evidently basing his remarks on the Review Report (Chisholm, 2000),

which confirms that this approach is to be continued (cf. also Asmal, 2000c). In addition, Asmal (2000b) claims, "This is a unanimous rejection of the apartheid education principles of Christian National Education and fundamental pedagogics."

Inasmuch as this may be politically legitimate, C2005 unfortunately does not resolve the many adversities on the micro level, which are analysed in the following section. These pragmatic issues are pertinent to the national contextual dynamics, in-service training, understanding of official policy documents, and a general need for support.

4.4.1 Discrepancies between policy intentions and teachers' experiences

What teachers believe and how they experience education policy change is also linked to the national context, or the broader context of South African education. Likewise, teachers' thinking, understanding and experiences impact the contextual influence of education policy change. According to Harley *et al.* (1999:127), the apartheid South African education system was highly centralised and bureaucratic with a top-down approach to curriculum. Teachers were then so-called "curriculum receivers" and not "curriculum developers". Policy documents such as the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (COTEP, 1998), however, called for a more active participation in curriculum development, such as interpreting and designing learning programmes and materials. Teachers, though, do not see themselves as curriculum shapers, since often they do not see themselves as professionals. Some view themselves as efficient, committed and good for the profession, although *"we do not get basic respect as a profession"* (P2 2:135 826-827).

The lack of respect relates to the fact that many teachers are either underqualified or poorly qualified. This is perpetuated by the fact that highly experienced teachers leave the education system, opting for voluntary severance packages (cf. Hartshorne, 1999:116). Chisholm (1999:19) correspondingly argues in this context that the:

> cumulative impact of the negative public image combined with the magnitude of changes making themselves felt in schools and classrooms is likely to backfire on the successful implementation of new, innovative curricula. Without renewed public confidence and

support of teachers, their motivation not only to teach but to teach with enthusiasm will be hampered.

The reason why teachers are not treated in a professional manner is explained by P2, who was requested to participate in the development of curriculum policy change, although she felt that it was only to be a feigned process. She and her colleagues were very disappointed in the unprofessional manner in which this process was conducted, and they felt deceived: *"We were led to believe it would influence policy changes with the view to the curriculum"* (P2 2:5 24-26). She goes on to describe how the National Qualifications Framework had been presented in its final draft although they were told that they would have some input:

> *The qualifications framework was already written in blood and we were told beforehand that we would have inputs into that...* (2:10 57-66).

> *But the point was we had already been notified that these documents that we have been told we were going to be a part of, had already been written. So that was when I sort of backed off and did not become involved any more...* (2:12 71-77).

This response is contradictory to the "well-meant intentions" of teachers as "curriculum developers", (cf. COTEP, 1998). While there was some initial willingness to participate in that process, teachers suspended their attempts and disconnected themselves from it. That in itself is reason for distrusting the integrity of education policy change. This not only leads to disrespect for the policymaking, but also to recipients of policy – that is, teachers – dissociating themselves from the implementation phase.

Within a context of mistrust and disconnection, Spillane *et al.* (1996:432-433) add another perspective as they argue that:

> Practitioners' understandings of reformers' proposals are shaped by a variety of factors above and beyond the policy texts they read – including the context in which local teachers learn, the ideas and

knowledge they bring to their encounters with policy texts, and the discourse communities in which practitioners are immersed.

They suggest "that practitioners' responses to policy might best be thought of as learning from policy texts rather than as passively absorbing and implementing some uniform, fixed vision of policy." Depending on teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learning and academic subject matter, they filter and construct different meanings from policy text. In sum, on the one hand, teachers mediate their personal understanding of curriculum policy change, and on the other hand, this creation of meaning is constructed within a particular national, structural, and transformation political context:

> *En die groot verandering het natuurlik nou ingetree met die politieke verandering waar ons van die apartheid oor gegaan het in ander era waar ons nou meer demokraties is, waar mense meer 'n insae kan hê ook in terme van beleid, in terme van die bestuur* (P5 5:5 49-55).

This political transformation drives education policy change, and some teachers believe that the political process may have little if any impact on what happens in the classroom:

> *...90% of what is going on in education is politically motivated, it becomes so difficult, because changes, everybody knows changes must be gradual and ... who has ever studied education, knows that you have no impact on the little guy in the classroom whatsoever* (P2 2:34 190-196).

Education is a political issue and many teachers realise that education policy change is politically motivated. P4 (4:14 135-143) summarises her views on this:

> *...I can understand and I really have a compassion for that, that a policy change was needed to include people who have been formerly excluded from certain things...*

Another teacher P5 (5:33/34 520-541) presents another political perspective, arguing that curriculum is very much a prescription and *must* be implemented:

> *Met ander woorde jy kan nie in jou eie politieke oortuiging kan jy nie in jou onderwys situasie waarin jy is kan jy dit nie op die voorgrond plaas nie. Jy moet heeltemal op die agtergrond omdat jy 'n diens lewer. Ja en jy moet in jou gemeenskap diens lewer en dit is mense met verskillende politieke oortuigings. Die van hulle wat redelik ontvanklik is vir die verandering en wat miskien nie so 'n verregse politieke uitkyk het nie, is dit makliker om die verandering te absorbeer as die ouens wat miskien 'n bietjie meer verregs is. Hulle het baie meer rigiede dinge waarin hulle glo en ek dink dit is vir hulle moeiliker om sekere dinge te aanvaar ...want omdat dit 'n gegewe is, dit is basies soos 'n wet wat deurgevoer word, so daar is nie 'n uitsondering, dit is iets wat glad nie kan, jy moet dit doen* (P5 5:47 1023-1036).

> *Daar is nou ook 'n kurrikulum wat voorgeskryf is en die kurrikulum is 'n gegewe, met ander woorde daar is nie 'n wegkom kans nie, dit moet geïmplementeer word* (P5 5:6 59-63).

> *Dit is nie debatteerbaar nie, so en wat jou skool en jou personeel daarmee gaan maak, gaan afhang van hoe hulle dit aanpak en seer sekerlik wil 'n mens graag 'n sukses daarvan maak* (P5 5:48 1041-1046).

The following section deals with issues relating to further training and professional development, particularly with regards to curriculum change.

4.4.2   Further training and professional development

Despite the fact that education authorities offer workshops and courses, there are various problems in this regard. Teachers talked about how information arrived late at the schools and that trainers were ill-equipped to conduct the training workshops:

> *... where there are meetings on policy changes we always get it two weeks after the meeting has taken place, which is extremely frustrating* (P1 1:2 29-32).

> *... basically we have been made aware of at this stage, is this whole OBE type education. But very little information is coming through to*

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us. If we do not have contact with other schools then there is no information ... (P1 1:4 33-36).

P1 (1:6 48-49) attended one workshop for the new curriculum as a representative of her school, and then was instructed to workshop it with the staff back at her school irrespective of her competence and knowledge, assuming that one workshop would prepare her fully to conduct subsequent workshops.

According to P2 (2:46 259-264) many underqualified teachers need guidance in this new approach in education:

> *...so many people ... because they are certifying all the way down, you know qualifications are no longer provisos, so you are getting certified with a standard 8, now what guidance do those people have?*

P4 (4:25 364-369) also holds that there are problems with underqualified staff and with those who continue in their old ways of teaching, despite their attendance at the workshops:

> *So they feel safe in that environment of, and they might be willing to try new things provided that they have been provided with the knowledge in an absolutely step by step way.*

P4 (4:27 378-390) continues that some teachers are in need of particular and specific guidance with regard to the new ways of teaching and might implement these new strategies if they were secure enough to do so:

> *And I think that makes up a very small group of people, basically people who want to find out very quickly how to do the job and they are perfectly happy to stick to it. They will change, permitted that the new set of rules is spelt out very clearly, but if there is any input from their side that they have to go and explore and look for new ways and come up with new ideas and even challenge themselves.*

> *I am saying this coming from a background where I worked in the private sector for many years, teachers work in such a protected*

environment and I see very little, if any, taking responsibility for mistakes that they might make (P4 4:28 392-399).

Further training and professional development certainly does not mean throwing out the baby with the bathwater, as P 2 (2:56 316-320) illustrates: *"I do feel that it is a pity that we do not learn from the past and other people's experience."* She adds that teachers need to be *"re-educated"* (2:88 515-510). Training, particularly in facilitation skills and listening and responding skills, needs to be introduced. Awareness needs to be created amongst teachers that further training is imperative:

> *I also think that 90% of teachers suffer from inertia. You know how many teachers do upgrade? You know there is no way that you can get a qualification in 1976 that is going to keep you abreast of the times in 1999* (P2 2:151 946-950).

> *What concerns me is that some teachers might not have the experience or the drive, you know because teaching takes an incredible amount of energy ...* (P3 3:15 81-85).

> *...you make it [policy change] work, but there are teachers that cannot make it work, you know they do not know how...* (P3 3:19 121-1213).

However, teachers are told that they are facilitators:

> *which teacher has really been taught to facilitate? We have not been taught to do that.* (P3 3:46 409-412).

> *If every person could do a course in facilitation, it would just make it so much easier and then you understand what you are actually doing* (P3 3:48 444-446).

Further training opportunities should be created, not in recess times or in the afternoons, but a proper relief system should be implemented facilitating continuous teaching with as little absenteeism as possible:

> *But there should be this process in that you actually have relief teachers on a regular basis that in that grade 3 group or something,*

once every two years off goes Joe Soap for a month and to come back and share with the other two or three or four ... (P2 2:155 990-997).

Afternoons, that is another thing. You know you have got to go after a whole day of teaching, you have got to go and sit there in the heat and they babble on about ... You go to different schools you know. We have had at N.H... If you asked me what, how I would tackle this I would say: right, each school has to send X amount of teachers and we are going to workshop it for a whole week. You come from 08:00 till 15:00 and we are going to work with this practically. You are going to work out your lessons (P3 3:37 275-287).

Sometimes invitations to further training events arrived too late and teachers lost out on learning opportunities:

We often get invited to meetings too late, it comes two days after the meeting has been and then they tell us there was a meeting there (P3 3:3 20-23).

Workshops and training courses offered only once without any follow-up are not sufficient, and the information may become distorted:

Say for example 100 people get trained and it has got to go to half a million, that information gets distorted every time it gets passed on, because who trains the people that gave us the course? Now we were told right, now you know what this is all about, after one course, you know what this is all about, now you go back to your teachers and you train them. Okay so now this is my whole interpretation, my own interpretation. Okay, you have got the notes and things like that and you could stick to that, but so now I think fables out again and from there on it ... (P3 3:61 681-692).

The workshops that were attended were not up to standard and course facilitators also lacked the skills they were supposed to teach:

And then I must say that courses that I have attended where we were introduced to the OBE situation, we just found that the people who conducted the courses, really it was of a very poor standard (P4 4:11 114-12).

Other teachers have become reluctant to participate in workshops:

> *... I have noticed that teachers, if your heart is not in teaching then you are definitely not going to walk that extra mile to get yourself knowledgeable and to bring the knowledge to the classroom and to try and equip your children with the necessary skills (P4 4:17 274-295).*

This willingness or unwillingness impacts the "openness" to policy change:

> *So it is going to leave a very small core group and I think if you can divide them again into those that are really committed to making this work and to open themselves to training and to new ideas and things like that, you will also have the group that will never be open to that and they will just go on regardless of policy change or whatever... (P4 4:20 306-316).*

> *...my experience is that teachers, especially in a primary school environment, develop very little personal growth. I have been teaching at the same school for 12 years now and I have seen very little progression in my colleagues. I see regression unfortunately in many of them. It seems as though they are more threatened, more scared, want to be more protected and stuff like that instead of going out facing the world (P4 4:39 523-537).*

It appears, according to P4 (4:41 564-578), that further training and education adds to the well-being of teachers and builds up their self-concept, which in turn facilitates an openness towards change, probably because their "character" is not attacked:

> *...in the 12 years that I have been with my school very few of my colleagues have involved themselves in further studies. In other words and I am of the opinion that a qualification obtained 20 and 30 years ago, I mean without any upgrading of any sorts, can really not be very relevant, especially in the changes that we are facing today.*

P5 (5:35 576:597) also endorses the importance of continuing and further study:

> *Soos byvoorbeeld by tersiêre inrigtings, ja ek dink tog dit maak jou wakker, dit dwing jou om nuwe inligting wat ook aktuele inligting*

bevat en daaroor te dink en daaroor te redeneer. Waar as 'n mens jou basies net blootstel teen 'n daaglikse onderwysprogram, jy is so geprogrammeer deur dit wat jy in die klaskamer doen jy jou buitemuurse program dat ek dink die ouens is in die aande so dood moeg dat hulle kry skaars tyd om byvoorbeeld nuus te kyk, om 'n bietjie wyer te lees of wat ook al. So as jy nie onderworpe is aan 'n sekere ding of 'n kursus waarvoor jy ingeskryf is nie, waarmee jy gedwing word om inligting te absorbeer, om inligting jou eie te maak nie, om met 'n wyer konteks inligting te doen te kry nie, dan dink ek is daar 'n mate van, kan dit beteken 'n ou begin stagneer.

The responsibility for further training lies with the individual teacher. The department offers little training:

Daar het nog nie opleiding van die departement se kant af gekom nie, so ek sou wou sien dat 'n mens vir hulle voordat hulle angs of sulke goed belewe dat 'n mens op 'n manier dalk dink en dit het ek nou gesien met hierdie didaktiese pedagogie waar 'n mens te doen gehad het met basiese filosofieë en teorieë waar ek gesê het as ek hierdie ding daar volgens personeel op hierdie manier kon oordra dan gaan dit vir hulle dalk makliker wees as die grondslagfase wat dit miskien op 'n ander manier moes gehoor het. Dat 'n mens dit uit 'n ander invalshoek, uit 'n ander perspektief vir hulle kan sê, bietjie meer, ek wil amper sê op hulle gevoel speel en in terme van dit is 'n manier hoe ons dit vir onsself kan makliker maak, hoe ons in die proses kan groei, hoe dit vir ons kan verrykend wees. So ek sou dit graag wou doen byvoorbeeld met die senior personeel. (P5 5:43 792:813)

These findings are supported by a study conducted in the Eastern Cape by Elkonin and Foxcroft (1998), who found that training in OBE was quite disastrous. Teachers did not get the kind of training they needed and their questions remained unanswered. This notion introduces the ensuing section regarding the complexity of official documents.

4.4.3 Complexity of official document texts

A variety of contextual influences concerning education policy change emerged from the empirical data. P1 (1:10 70-73) expressed an unclear understanding of the

process – *"too wishy washy"* – and felt that official documents were not *"concrete"* enough for her understanding.

Most teachers I spoke to did not focus much on the complexity of the policy documents. I would ascribe that simply to the fact that many never had the complete documents available to study in detail. However, P1 did reflect on the complexity of the documents and literature, and indicated that teachers had trouble in this regard.

Many teachers do not understand the obscure, abstract-sounding policy. The Review Committee (Chisholm 2000) found that the language and terminology were complex and confusing. In practice, this implies that the implementation of such policies is at an "appearance" level instead of at the "real" level. In addition and linked to this issue, is that initiators of macro education policy change, whether at national or provincial level, may be more concerned with the symbols rather than the substance of educational change. Put differently, the government that has initiated Curriculum 2005 and OBE would like to be seen and acknowledged to be doing something good and having noble intentions, regardless of whether it is actually happening in practice. That is why policy requires extensive publicity, which in turn requires funding, resulting in delaying the actual implementation process due to lack of money (cf. also "delayed effects of education" in Bock, 1982:79). Carr (1995:29) also mentions the "incomprehensible jargon that seems to have nothing to do with their everyday problems and concerns".

A final comment in this context is that policy documentation is available mostly in English and many teachers had to translate the polices, which in itself leads to altered interpretations. This is perpetuated by the fact that OBE as a philosophy elicits a variety of diverse versions, even from those who speak English as a first language. The question can then be raised, how do teachers who use English as second, third or even fourth language, translate the new curriculum in order to comprehend it? This process presents the following problem, namely the lack of support.

4.4.4   Need for support

As described in section 4.2.7, the Elkonin and Foxcroft (1998) study revealed that lack of appropriate resources and lack of materials worsen the possibilities of sound implementation in the classrooms. New policies cannot ensure the intended outcomes, even if they are efficiently supported by appropriate teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, structural changes in education as well as curricular reviews, will not have the desired effect if they are not supplemented with integrated policies intended to empower the role of teachers. On the contrary, P2 (2:45 252-259) contends that

> *I actually believe that it widens the gap, because your better teachers, you know your superior teachers can have an absolute ball, which means your independent school teachers, your teachers that are better qualified, that have better experience, know about lateral thinking, ... they know where to hold on to the syllabus, and when to not.*

Some teachers may not need a great deal of support, and actually become quite creative:

> *...en daar sien ek ook ouens wat 'n bietjie meer kreatief is, wat gewoond is om dinge nie net op een manier te doen nie, hulle het 'n verskeidenheid fasette wat hulle byvoorbeeld 'n les aanpak* (P5 5: 456-61).

Other teachers prefer more structure and guidance and some are even rigid in their approach, and thus are in need of support:

> *Die onderwysers is nog maar lief om vas te hou aan 'n struktuur* (P5 5:27 357-359).

> *Ja hulle is baie rigied, hulle probeer nie verskillende tendense en dinge en eintlik as 'n mens mooi daaroor dink maak dit vir jouself ook die lewe baie makliker en ek dink dit maak die saak vir die onderwys baie meer bevredigend dat jy kan sê hoor hier ek kan dit op hierdie*

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manier, maar daardie manier werk ook. Vir myself is dit verrykend, dit word nie vervelig (P5 5:31 472-481).

The theme of the widening gap is discernible at the level of knowledge and in the level of enthusiasm:

> *Jy weet wat vir my bekommerd maak is by ons skool dink ek het ons die kundiges, maar in terme van die entoesiasme in terme van die visie vorentoe, weet ek nie of hulle by ons ander kultuur wat nou besig is om te leer en te groei, as ek nou die twee teen mekaar moet stel sal ek sê miskien is die entoesiasme in daardie opsig dalk 'n bietjie sterker en die kundigheid minder. Hierdie kant is ons kundigheid wat sterk is, entoesiasme dalk 'n bietjie minder. So ons sal moet pasop dat 'n mens nie met jou entoesiasme wat minder word dalk langs die pad nie meer groei nie, maar stagneer en dat die ander wat goed is dat hulle op kom. Maar verstaan jy hulle sal moet pasop, nie net hierdie beeld van ons is kundig, ons weet alles* (P5 5:39 701:719).

In brief, in the context of curriculum policy change, different teachers require different types of support. Some need learning support material and guidance in how to use them. Whatever the requirement, government will have to address the issues pertaining to curriculum implementation and the follow-up support (cf. also Chisholm, 2000). Some teachers expressed some deep concerns about Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA) and their perceptions of lowering academic standards. This will be analysed next.

4.4.5   Standards and assessment

P4 (4:16 257-263) expressed her concerns about the lowering standards and naïve expectations of policy change:

> *I think that for white people in this country it is a grave concern, because we are very unsure, because I think we are not as gullible as other racial groups who might be thinking that this is going to open up new worlds. We rather see it and interpret it in terms of perhaps the standard that is going to be lowered.*

Not only will standards be lowered, but also difficulty will be experienced in maintaining standards:

> *Reasoning and stuff like that, I cannot see that we can maintain the standards that we used to because we are battling just to maintain standards in our own schools under basically good conditions (P4 4:16 252-263).*

Concerns were expressed within the context of lowering standards and the feeling that *"all will pass irrespective of knowledge levels"*:

> *...and each child is on a different level and it does not matter if this child only knows one thing about water and the other child knows five things, they are both a pass (P1 1:8 54-58).*

P3 (3:24 142-147) also explained that teaching mathematics necessarily incorporates drilling exercises and cannot solely be *experienced,* as is the perception:

> *Another thing that really worries me, I mean we have been, I was a product of where they threw the drilling of maths out and we had to experiment and I know that a whole lot of my generation could not spell, we do not know our tables because of the system that we had (P3 3:52 526-531).*

According to P3 (3:44 382-383), the positive side of Outcomes-Based Assessment is that the learner is assessed as an individual, and not as a "groupie".

> *And the other thing that I regarded as a very positive thing was that they are going to do in OBE, that they are going to do away with just assessing a child on his academic performance, that other variants of skills and of achievements are also going to be included in assessment and also in teaching subjects that they are going to extend in some way or another (P4 4:3 35-46).*

> *At this point in time I have sort of, I have come to terms with certain things. I know what I want in life and I know that in my classroom I am going to bring in the necessary changes and if it is not for the children then even it is for myself, just to know that I still want to do, I still want to participate. And then one thing that I feel strongly about,*

I want to give a child that has been sitting in my classroom the very best (P4 4:48 661-673).

I am still willing to do that, but to concern myself with the system and in a way I have given up on that. I am concerning myself with individuals that go through my hands and I always see it as a positive sign (P4 4:52 713-719).

The following aspect, group work, relates closely to OBE and much controversy has been experienced in this regard.

4.4.6   Group work

Group work forms part of the new curriculum approach. Teachers have various viewpoints and strong feelings with regard to whether or not to implement group work. Teachers have many opinions relating to differences in personalities and the potential of learners. Also, the older staff members would find it difficult to do group work due to the "noise" in the classroom, and the different perceptions of how they view group work, for example as "play time".

Although P1 (1:17 50-53) perceives group work as important, in her opinion the learner as individual still remains important:

...there are certain things that group work should be involved and all that, but the individual is still important and they have moved away totally from individuals so that your stronger child is now carrying your weaker child .

Group work is usually done where some brainstorming is involved, either before or after some new work but seldom in the middle of something. (P1 1:40 236-243). Group work is suitable for research activities, which can be fruitfully implemented by all. There are, however, also some difficulties:

But it is difficult because it is noisy, other teachers do not like the noise next door to you, which makes it difficult. A lot of your older

staff think you are playing, in your class you are too casual, you know you have got to find a medium... (P1 1:45 249-253).

Not only do teachers have difficulty in using the ideas of others, but learners do not always wish to share their work in a group. Bright children are merely copied and the lazier child gets away with doing little (cf. also 4.3.3). But often teachers are not trained in the processes of group work (P3 3:17 105-106).

So often that is why you do not bring about teamwork in schools and things like that, because teachers do not want to borrow other people's methods because they believe in their own (P2 2:40 215-219).

The danger in that, if you do everything you have got in group work, is you get your little weak child that sits back and he does nothing (P3 3:9 37-39).

That is what worries me about the group work, is that they are not strong enough to actually pull a child like that into a group, not at eight year old level (P3 3:12 59-62).

Good organisation and sound lesson planning with clear objectives are imperative to effective group work:

... you have got to mix, you know you must have homogenous groups, you must have heterogeneous groups, and clear objectives as to what you are grouping for... (P2 2:105 657-661).

Other perceptions with regard to group work relate to feelings of domination and secondary roles in the group (P2 2:97 571-573). P3 (3:43 364-370) mentions that although group work is particularly important within the context of adult working life, where people should be able to work together, in the classroom context it does present some problems:

I have spoken to some and their biggest problem with this whole thing is the discipline, the incredible amount of noise, because it is group work (P3 3:57 610-614).

Another disturbing finding relates to diagnosing problems in the classroom, particularly where some bright children have merely been copied during group work and problems do not become apparent (P2 2:103 642-647). The effect during group work may be that bright children set the pace and leave the others behind:

> *So then the bright are setting the pace and you are not picking up remedial problems and things like that or you may not be picking it up* (P2 2:105 647-650).

> *That is why I say to you I can see that we are going to educate ... but it really worries me because I think we are going to have kids that are going through a whole system and they have learnt nothing* (P3 3:51 520-524).

On this note of future concerns relating to OBE, the analysis of this specific issue comes to an end. The closing theme highlights the role of teachers as they focus on values and professionalism in a context of education policy change.

4.5   Values: teachers' roles and views of professionalism

While teachers' roles are prescribed and appropriated, their personal views, perceptions and beliefs of professionalism and identity of self are constructed from within as well as shaped from without. I agree with Hargreaves (1994:62), who says,

> Teachers' beliefs and practices are grounded not only in expertise and altruism, but also in structures and routines to which they have become attached and in which considerable self-interest may be invested. Such structures have often evolved historically to meet political and moral purposes that are different from those which many would consider important.

In this setting Harley *et al.* (1999) indicate that teachers' value systems impact what they are able to do, what they believe they should do, and what they actually do.

There are differing interpretations of policy concepts, which in itself has potential conflict between policy and practice.

4.5.1   Teacher perceptions and conceptions

Teachers' perceptions and how these are conceptualised can no longer continue to be overlooked in the process of educational transformation (cf. Tedesco, 1997:10). We need to realise that teachers do have different orientations that make some comfortable with policy change while others are less comfortable. In addition, it is not simply a matter of changing policy and structures, but rather a matter of "seeing" things with different lenses, which is no easy feat.

Although policy changes are prescriptive in nature by virtue of their political mandate, they are contested, debated and mediated. Also, how teachers "see" themselves in their profession relates closely to how they deal with policy change. We cannot disregard the context of constructed contestations. On the one hand, teachers will shape their understanding individually, independently of structural constraints. On the other hand, their knowledge construct takes place from a functionalist-structural perspective, which implies that teachers' agency (special characteristics) are influenced by the educational structures.

Both views offer only a limited understanding of how teachers' perceptions and understanding are shaped. Teachers do not independently create their own world, and the educational structure *per se* does not determine the teacher. Instead there is a dialectical process in meaning making, created and given by teachers to their educational world, which becomes institutionalised (turned into social structure), and this educational structure then becomes part of the meaning systems employed by them, which also limit certain actions (cf. "Agency and Structure" in Abercrombie, 1984:9ff).

This being the case, Anderson's (1990:38-59) discussion of the construction of the "inner eye" and the social construction thereof implies unexamined assumptions about the social world of inquiry – here, the hidden assumptions of education policy

change. We saw in section 4.2.1 that the assumptive world captures the subjective experience of the "actor". Needless to add that the understanding of teachers' experiences of educational policy change cannot rest only with "observable behaviour", from which only some inferences and deductions may be drawn. It is the subjective nature, the transformation and meaning making of education policy change, which is important if we wish to understand the complexities of policy change.

What teachers think of education policy change evidently impacts its implementation. I cite P4's reflection here once more to highlight the notion of the difference of teachers' understandings of change.

> *I must admit that in the beginning when I first heard about the 2005 and the OBE situation, I was not very partial to that, because I just thought that it was just a new gimmick, that they were, you know they had to do something different just to get away from old political sort of habits and stuff like that, so I was not very partial to that* (P4 4:1 16-26).

Teachers work in protected environments and often do not take responsibility for their mistakes (P4 4:28 392-399). Often they become rather confined in thinking:

> *I find it a great pity that teachers who work with children, with these eager minds, that they in themselves are very confined in their own thinking, in their own way of teaching and not being able to move out of that very protected little circle* (P4 4:30 407-415).

The following sections deal with perceived roles of teachers as "receivers" or "developers" of curriculum policy change.

4.5.2   Teachers' roles: receivers or developers of curriculum

The issue at stake is, are teachers only receivers or are they also developers of curriculum? Put differently, the study by Broadfoot (1992:45) asks, is the teacher "primarily an efficient functionary who implements received polices in the

apprenticeship model, or as somebody who has a framework of reference which enables him/her to understand the rationale of his/her work and its challenges."

From the empirical data, it is clear that some teachers hold strong views on professionalism (cf. section 4.4.5). They want to be seen by society as professionals and treated accordingly (P1 1:93 498-504). Furthermore, some honestly believe that they are the best:

> *...I think that education thrives on the fact that 99,9% of teachers think they are the best...* (P2 2:38 210-213) ... *and they are better than everybody else and that is why they continue to have their input because they are so much better...* (P2 2:39 213-215).

Not only are their ideas the best, but their methods are perceived better, as they pride themselves on teaching in a particular manner for so many years:

> *... some teachers will use it as a compliment to themselves that they are doing exactly the same thing as they did 20 years ago* (P2 2:67 394-397).

Personal perceptions and "outsider" points of view are sometimes implicit, and become part of covert policy change dynamics that often remain hidden, as Vulliamy *et al.* (1997:101-102) suitably elucidate. Inquiries into the impact of national education policy, where the "context of micro decision making" and "...the manner in which teachers' prior values and self-identities play a major role in influencing the manner in which national and local policies are implemented at the school level", often stay concealed or secret. Values, beliefs, self-identity and the locus of inner authority partly constitute the micro context, which impacts education policy change both as process and as product.

As stated previously, the "inner eye", assumptive worlds and subjective experiences shape teachers' identities, which are powerful mediators in terms of their interpretation of and responses to policy change (cf. Vulliamy *et al.*, 1997:97-115). Whether they "see" themselves as receivers or developers of education policy

change, certainly impacts their responses to it as suggested in various sections in this chapter. I do not intend to elaborate on the specific roles – such as strategists, implementers and recipients – described by Jick (1991), because they were not touched upon in the empirical data. This in itself offers some understanding of where the participants are in this regard. Either they are not aware of these roles, or they choose deliberately not to become part of this process. Issues such as taking responsibility and being accountable remain covert. This is evident in the type of discourse used by most of the participants. Seldom is the word "I" used in their responses – rather "you", "they" or simply "teachers" – despite the fact that they were clearly referring to their own experiences. For example, P3 (3:50 457-470) talks about how little time there is:

> *You know I feel strongly about it, I feel that teachers are, we have got no personal time left and if you do not have personal time you cannot grow. We are like these bulls that race through a tunnel just to get to the end, you know with all the, and education is snowballing, everything is snowballing. You know you just think you have got something sort of sorted out and then they throw a whole new issue at you, you know and there is never enough time to really get stuck into what you are doing.*

Understanding teacher thinking, which in part would become more precise through an accurate discourse analysis, is another means to enhance the nuanced sensibilities of education policy change. Cohen, McLaughlin and Talbert (1993:55ff) argue, "…understanding teacher-thinking involves understanding how teachers respond to an ever-changing situation with knowledge that is contextual, interactive, and speculative." More often than not, teachers must learn new roles and unlearn old ones, and remaining in a comfort zone of not changing is much easier.

In this context, Harley *et al.* (1999:186) denote that evidence from their research suggests that there is a gap between what teachers are able to do, what they *believe* they should do, and what they *actually do*. They conclude that differing interpretations of policy have an effect on the competence with which teachers fulfil their roles. Some feel challenged, others want to "change the world", while others would rather have the "status quo". For example, P4 (4:53/54 746-784) shares how

she views her role in the policy change process, a citing used earlier in a slightly different context:

> *I think previously I wanted to change the whole world, to change the whole system. I have given up on that. I am concerning myself with individuals and every year when I get a new set of pupils I really try and do the best that I can do for them and that is about the best that I can do at this point in time. I would definitely like to see that we still make an effort to try and sway the hearts and minds of teachers.*

How teachers interpret policy and shape its meaning is also influenced by their self-identity and their individuality.

4.5.3   Identity of self and professional needs

Identity of self is closely linked to the perception of roles. This theme is more implicit than others and could only become apparent through teachers' experiences in their search for identity. In order to grasp the subjective complexity in the search for identity, we need to understand whether the mediation of policy change is an individual concern or a collective struggle, for both will reveal diverse and particular interpretations. Literature does reveal that teachers' self-identity is not only a powerful mediator with regard to their policy change interpretations, but also in terms of their responses (cf. Vulliamy *et al.*, 1997). Ball and Bowe (1992:114) argue that "owing to the interpretation of the orders at the national, local and school levels the National Curriculum is not so much being implemented in schools as being *re-created*, not so much *reproduced* as produced." Broadfoot *et al.* (1988:283), in the comparative analysis study of primary schooling in France and England, state that the ideology or conception of their professional role plays a crucial part in determining what teachers do. The external indicators are not as powerful to change educational values and identities, which truly provide the rationale for teachers' actions and responses.

In this inquiry P5 (5:40,41 749:774) reveals how the identity and the professional role of the teacher touches educational practice:

Okay as jy net 'n onderwyser is dan gaan jy die beleidsverandering gaan jy hoor en jy gaan basies net volgens die rigiede ding gaan jy hom net so doen. Maar as jy onderwys leef dan gaan jy op verskillende maniere al hierdie goed kreatief meedoen, jy gaan die beste vir jou leerders kry, jy gaan hulle ook motiveer, op die ou end gaan jy kreatiewe onderwysers en kreatiewe leerders kry. Dit is die verskil, dit is 'n besielende onderwyser met besielende groepwerk, besielende kinders en ek dink dit kan goeie resultate gee. Daar is een wat net 'n onderwyser is en daar is die ander groep wat onderwys leef, hulle leef, hulle beleef onderwys, die ander een is net 'n onderwyser. En daar is 'n groot verskil tussen die twee. Of jy net 'n onderwyser is en of jy onderwys uitleef, of jou onderwys beleef.

Living and fulfilling the profession rather than just doing a job certainly impacts policy change implementation. This thought is explicated in the following section.

Being a professional teacher means being capable, competent, skilled and ultimately committed to teaching and learning (cf. Soudien, 1997). This is, however, not only a perception from within but also projection from the society. It is an iterative process, moving here and there, as viewpoints are exchanged and altered through time. While an emic view may be a professional one, the etic conception may be precisely the opposite. Moreover, if these projections are internalised, behaviour may change accordingly.

The South African Council for Teachers' (1997) *Code of Conduct* takes primary responsibility for defining and promoting the ethics and values of professionalism. Not only do policy documents form a legal employment contract between teachers and the Minister of Education, they also provide a framework for professional development. From the empirical data of this inquiry, little if any responses were given in this context directly, although some participants reflected that they did not know how to behave professionally. P1 (1:77 389-392) explains:

It is because, look you had part of it, we were all part of workshopping it and so on and we still put it all together and then, but you sort of feel are you not professional enough to know how to behave?

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France was found to be very difficult to implement. Findings that are relevant for this inquiry relate to *restricted and extended professionalism*. Restricted professionalism refers to teachers' thought and educational practice, which is mostly intuitive, and classroom based, while the extended professionality accounts for the broader educational context and a wider range of professional activities. How teachers conceive their professional role influences their educational practice (cf. Broadfoot *et al.,* 1988:283). These beliefs are important because teachers act on their beliefs, which are moulded or shaped by values and cultural understandings.

The notion on professionalism was only alluded to briefly, but it is significant enough to reveal those reflections. P1 (1:75 381-385) shares her subdued feelings regarding her professional stance:

> *So suddenly for somebody like me I mean I have been teaching for ten years, to suddenly be told you know ten years in private education that from now onwards you will behave according to this set piece of paper… Also, I think that one must be allowed your professionalism as a right to make decisions…* (P1 1:93 498-504).

And P2 (2:26 316-320) shares her point of view:

> *… I do feel that it is a pity that we do not learn from the past and other people's experience, because you know world-wide people are going back to conservative and traditional education.*

The final theme that relates to professionalism and teachers' roles contextualises education policy change in the wider societal sector. Teachers are part of the competitive world, both locally and globally, and this is clearly visible in our schools.

4.5.4   Competition and rivalry

P5 (5:19 235-238) explains this competition and rivalry amongst teachers, considering that many posts have been made redundant, primarily for financial reasons.

Hulle kompeteer definitief, ons kry nie daardie ding uit nie, veral by die grondslag fase hoor ek, dit is ding wat nog baie sterk deur kom.

Ek dink dit hang in 'n groot mate saam met hierdie ding dat die poste uitgefaseer word. Daar word al hoe minder poste deur die departement gee, so daar is ouens wat nie 'n departementele post het nie, hulle het 'n beheerliggaam pos, dit is 'n tydelike pos, ek moet werk om my pos te hê. Wie gaan hulle op die ou end laat gaan? Die ouens wat dalk nie so goed in die klas hulle ding doen nie. So ek moet in die klas, ek moet oral kan bewys hoor hier ek is die beste of ek doen die beste. So daardie speel definitief 'n rol hoor dat ek moet, ek moet myself, ek moet my pos, ek moet kan verdien (P5 5:20 244-259)

Dit gaan baie oor ja, etikettering. Dit gaan baie vir hulle oor in hierdie graad is hierdie vyf onderwyseresse en 'n mens het nog steeds daardie ding van wie lewer, wie 'perform' die beste (P5 5:18 225-230).

In addition, little if any incentives are available to teachers to feel motivated in implementing education policy change:

Ek wil nie veralgemeen nie, ek dink dit is maar normaal redelik dat hulle miskien die spreekwoordelike wortel wat voor hulle gehou is; hulle sien nie meer daardie wortel nie. Met ander woorde in terme van positiewe inligting wat vir hulle kan, as ek 'n verdere kursus aanpak dan kan ek finansieel daarby baat, kan ek in aanmerking kom vir bevorderingsposte. Dit is miskien op hierdie stadium nie meer so realisties nie. Daar word nie baie poste geadverteer nie. In terme van verdere kategorie verhogings, dit geld nie regtig meer vir die onderwysers nie (P5 5:37,38 635-649).

4.6   Significance and implications

Four emerging themes have been discussed, and sub-themes have been alluded to. The affective dimensions of education policy change, discipline and control, OBE, and teacher roles and their view of professionalism have been analysed and discussed.

This chapter has shown that teachers do internalise policy change individually and subjectively, and that understanding teachers' perceptions adds complex

understanding and knowledge to the education policy change debate. In addition, it became clear that teachers are the focal point in the implementation phase of policy change. It is crucial to investigate why policy may not be implemented as expected. The gap between policy and practice will reap the benefits of teachers' responses, as they are at the grassroots and the receiving end of implemented policy.

Evident from the data is a word of caution to policy makers; namely that the authorities cannot place increasing demands on teachers and then take away support and resources. The low morale of teachers calls for sincere reflection, considering the far-reaching implications this has on learning, on the health of our education system and of course on the health of our teachers. It is imperative to attend to the care and the replenishment of teachers if they are to be dynamic, sensitive, and perceptive persons who can be and become excited about new ideas and education policy change.