

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 The Argument

The transformation of education in South Africa was premised on radically different theories of teaching and learning from those that underpinned apartheid education. The complex and multidimensional nature of the reforms created changes that disrupted teachers' existing patterns of behaviour (Salisbury & Conner, 1994; van den Berg & Slegers, 1996). These attempts to improve the quality of education included initiatives to increase the accountability and productivity of teacher work. The proposed policy reforms that followed had dramatic implications for the professional development of teachers. Teacher activities as well as attitudes, knowledge, values, and beliefs with respect to the teaching profession were crucial for these reforms to succeed.

Chief among these education reforms was the developmental appraisal system, or DAS. The purpose of DAS was to enhance the competency of educators, and accordingly, the quality of education. More specifically, by facilitating the personal and professional development of educators, DAS seeks to improve the quality of teaching practices in classrooms (Department of Education, 1998). In other words, DAS as a policy intervention targets the education system at the micro-level i.e., it targets the level of the entire range of educators as defined in the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No.76 of 1998. This range includes educators in the classroom, departmental heads, deputy principals, education development officers, supervisors and area project office leaders.

What is of concern is the distance between policy and practice, which seems to preoccupy much of the education policy literature. Official attention in South Africa seems to be focused on policy design without indicating how to translate such policy into measurable outcomes (Sayed and Jansen, 2001). The relationship between education policy and practice has been the subject of much research and debate (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 1991, 1995; Lieberman, 1998 and

McLaughlin, 1998). The problem of policy implementation surfaces prominently in this body of research. In the South African context, Rogan and Grayson (2001: 2) note that all too often policy-makers and politicians focus on the desired outcomes of educational change, neglecting contextual factors that influence implementation. Studies also show implementation processes, particularly those associated with large scale reforms, to elicit all kinds of conflicts, dilemmas, emotions, uncertainties and even resistance among teachers (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; Hargreaves, 1998; van den Berg & Ros, 1999).

In many instances, policy failure can be attributed to poor implementation or lack of foresight in the policy process. Systematic change can also be undermined when leaders attempt to underestimate conceptual and practical complexities in the interest of fast-paced implementation. This is evident in the South African context where the imperative of political change underpins much of the education reforms.

Therefore, in the context of my research, informed by concerns about teacher learning, I seek to gain insight into how the implementation of government policy on teacher appraisal, which is a form of teacher development, influences the way teachers strive to learn and seek to change their practices in different resource contexts.

The purpose of this case study, therefore, is to trace the implementation of government policy on teacher development in different contexts, and to determine the extent to which this policy influences teacher learning in these diverse contexts. The Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) is the main focus of the study. Accordingly, the research question that guides the inquiry is: What are the effects of developmental appraisal policy on “teacher learning” as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts?

1.2 The Policy Context for the Teacher Development Appraisal System

The impetus for the development of the developmental appraisal system is traced to the breakdown of the apartheid inspectorate system and subject advisory services in the majority of schools in South Africa (Department of Education, 1998). Between 1985 and early 1990 it became almost impossible for inspectors and subject advisors to go into township schools. Inspection as a means of fostering teacher development had been rejected as a form of political control by the apartheid state. This traditional method of evaluating teachers had not been designed to improve the quality of instruction or to bring about improvement in the schools. Inspection as an approach of appraising teachers did little to develop a climate of support and collegiality. Thus, given the vacuum created by this rejection, it became important for the post-apartheid policymakers to develop an appraisal system.

By 1993, all educator organizations and unions and all ex-departments of education were already involved in negotiations, which addressed the principles, processes and procedures for a new appraisal system. Simultaneously, further discussions and negotiations around the new appraisal system were taking place in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC¹). The ELRC is responsible for facilitating negotiations between the unions and departments of education at national and provincial levels. This led to the formulation of the guiding principles that informed the new appraisal system and the appraisal instrument to be used. On 28 July 1998, a final agreement was reached within the ELRC on the implementation of the new developmental appraisal system. The agreement is reflected in Resolution Number 4 of 1998. In terms of ELRC resolution, the new developmental appraisal system was to be implemented in 1999, with all its structural and other arrangements being put in place. At the same time, the effectiveness of the system would be monitored throughout the implementation process and it would be reviewed in April 2000 (Department of Education, 1998).

¹ ELRC: Education Labour Relations Council is a statutory council, established by the Education Labour Relations Act of 1993. It draws authority from the Labour Relations Act (LRA) of 1995

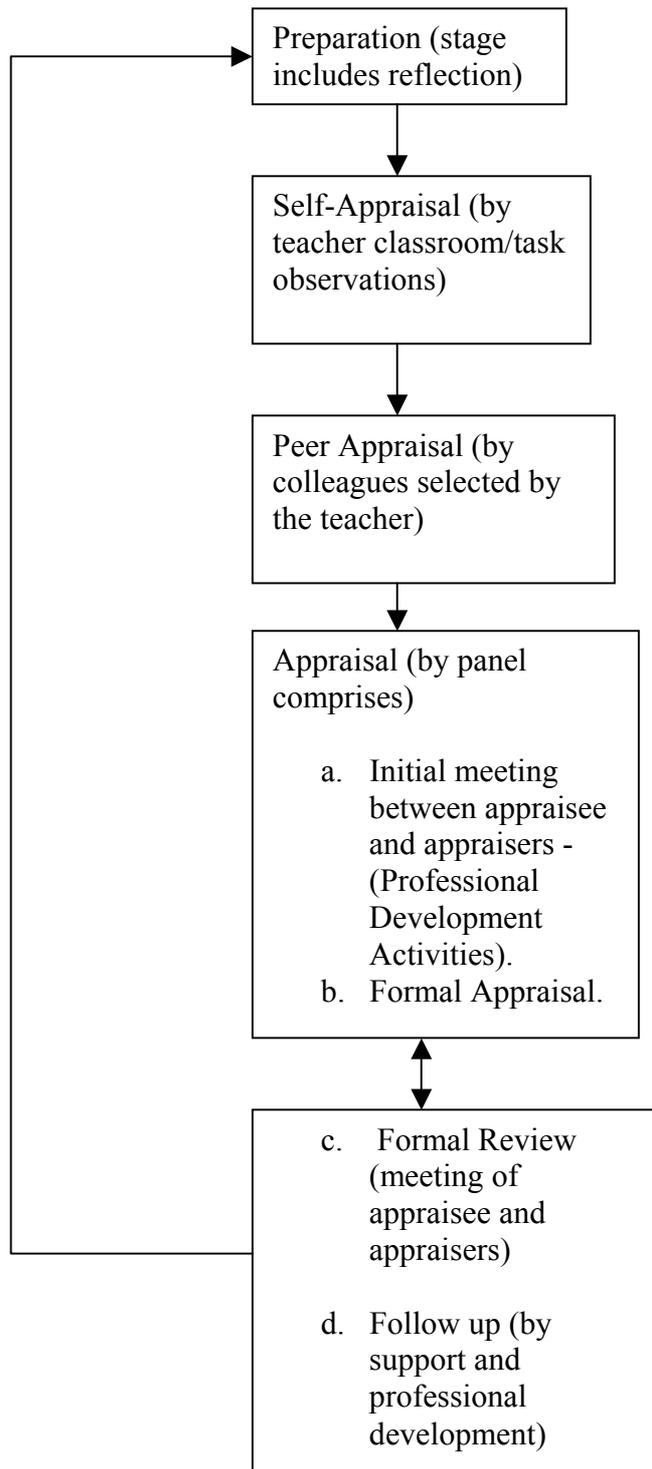
There was general agreement that appraisal was both necessary and desirable in that it would provide opportunities for the development of educators. Educators would be aware of what was expected of them, and the support that was available for improving themselves. If weaknesses were identified, processes and structures would be used to develop their skills and to improve their teaching.

The DAS policy aims at equipping educators with a critical and theoretically informed understanding of the philosophical assumptions that underpin the notions of appraisal and the developmental approach (Department of Education, 1998: 54). It also shows ways in which the critical and theoretically informed understandings are applied in the new developmental appraisal system for educators in South Africa. Primarily, the objectives of educator appraisal include improvement of individual and collective performance in schools, the establishment of accountability and the promotion of good teaching practice. To achieve the aims of developmental appraisal policy, the following must be met: democratic organizational climate; learning culture at institutions; commitment of educators to development; openness and trust. The White Paper on Education and Training also makes reference to these aspects (DoE, 1995: 12).

Developmental appraisal consists of the following ongoing processes (Figure 1):

- Reflective practice: Reflective practice is an ongoing activity that requires educators to interpret and analyse the extent to which their performance meets objectives in serving the needs of clients with the intention to rethink current practice;
- Self-appraisal: Educators undertake self-analysis and introspection in terms of own performance in order to determine priorities for personal and professional growth;
- Collaboration: Educators work together to assist in problem solving e.g. educators taking the same grade or educators from different institutions involved in teaching a particular learning area; and

Figure 1. Stages In The Appraisal Process



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- Interaction within panels: Relationships need to be developed between members to work collectively to assist the educator to identify needs, select professional development activities, implement such activities within time frames and to provide timeous feedback (Department of Education, 1998).

The developmental appraisal policy takes into account the constitutional provisions in keeping with the democratic educational processes, practices and transformation and ensures that what it allows for is consistent with the constitution of South Africa. It is also a way of ensuring that the developmental appraisal policy is in keeping with other processes of democratisation and transformation (Department of Education, 1998: 66). The developmental appraisal policy attempts to achieve its aims by engaging processes that are democratic, transparent and non-judgemental. It is designed to ensure that there is democratic participation in the appraisal process. The establishment of an appraisal panel would ensure democratic participation. In other words, the new developmental appraisal policy was meant to foster a democratic ethos within education and to establish as well as promote a culture based on human rights and fairness.

There was also agreement that if the system of appraisal was to be accepted at all, or if its credibility was to be restored, then the new system would have to take into account the contextual factors in which educators do their work. For example, it would have to consider whether the school was well or poorly resourced. This implied that educator effectiveness would be measured against the conditions under which they worked, and not the ideal conception of what every educator was supposed to produce (Swartz, 1994). Therefore, by seeking to implement a system of teacher appraisal, government intends to examine critically the process of education that takes place in the classroom.

Despite its importance, DAS experienced slippage during the earlier stages of its implementation. The educator unions challenged the Department of Education on the hurried implementation of Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) and the slack approach to the Developmental Appraisal System. This challenge came not only from the North West Province (NWP), but also nationally. In the North West Province the Member of

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the Executive Council (MEC²) for education (provincial Minister) intervened to resolve the impasse. Nationally, an agreement was reached on drawing up a protocol with a view to harmonizing the classroom observation instrument for both DAS and Whole School Evaluation (WSE). The protocol is intended to regulate the behavioural activities of Whole School Evaluators charged with the responsibility of assuring the implementation process of DAS.

In the North West Province (NWP), on 5 December 2002, the MEC for education set up a joint task team to pursue the following terms of reference:

- Establish, strengthen, and sustain the structures of DAS;
- Locate DAS in the Quality Assurance Chief Directorate (QACD);
- Redirect the resources of WSE to assist in the resuscitation of DAS; and
- Advocate the realignment of DAS and WSE protocol instrument.

Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding between the NWDE represented by the MEC for education, and the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), was drawn on 26 March 2003, in Mafikeng on the implementation of DAS and WSE. The resuscitation of DAS structures throughout the province and vigorous advocacy of DAS and WSE were emphasized. Schools were expected to start with the implementation of the two policies on 1 April 2003.

On 10 April 2003, the Collective Agreement Resolution No 3 of 2003, as stipulated by the ELRC was drawn up. It provides protocol and instrument for use when observing educators in practice for the purpose of DAS and WSE. It also stipulates that the existing Quality Management Process and protocol be aligned in the ELRC 30 by

² MEC: Refers to Member of the Executive Council in charge of education at the provincial level

June 2003. The Collective Agreement sets out the following:

- A set of principles to guide the integration of DAS and WSE processes;
- A protocol, which is a step-by-step set of procedures to be followed to guide evaluators during lesson observation; and
- A pre-lesson observation checklist, which should be discussed by the evaluators/appraisers.

Given the above developments, teams of WSE started with the resuscitation of DAS in the educational districts of NWP. According to the MEC for education, “structures are in place and the advocacy is on in the NWP” (DoE, 2003). In other provinces, DAS training continued until September 2003. In mid September, yet another twist to the implementation of DAS surfaced. The Director General of Education at national level issued a circular to the provincial departments recommending that all DAS training should be stopped because the new Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) would replace the existing separate systems viz. DAS-Resolution 4 of 1998³, WSE- as underpinned by NEPA, Act 27 of 1996⁴ and PMDS-Resolution 1 of 2003⁵, in 2004. This implies that DAS would no longer exist in its original form since Resolution 8 of 2003 of ELRC⁶ was signed to integrate the existing programmes on quality management in education (Schedule 1 of EEA, No. 76 of 1998⁷). The existing programmes are DAS, WSE and PMDS. This was an attempt to address the challenges and to ensure that the quality of appraisal was of an acceptable standard. In addition, it was also a way of ensuring that unions and teachers accepted the new appraisal system.

³ DAS (Development Appraisal System) is Resolution 4 of 1998 which aims at appraisal of educators in the system.

⁴ WSE (Whole School Evaluation) is a policy formulated in 2001 which aims at the effectiveness of the schools and is underpinned by the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) f27 of 1996.

⁵ PMDS (Performance Management Development System) which is resolution No.1 of 2003 aims at assessment of personnel for salary progression and confirmation of probation.

⁶ Resolution 8 of 2003 is the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) as approved by Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC).

⁷ Schedule 1 o Educator Employment Act (EEA) No.76 of 1998 aims at the performance standards of educators.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

The first and main motivation for doing this study is that there is not much research on policy implementation in developing countries (Wedekind et al., 1996: 421). The existing research is largely descriptive and prescriptive, or focuses largely on the problems of resources or politics as explanations for the gap between policy intentions and practical outcomes. There is very little research on what teachers actually do in their classrooms, what changes their practices, and the way they learn. Fuller and Snyder (1991: 274) note that little empirical work has been done on the various ways in which African teachers organize their work. It is therefore important to empirically examine the patterns and permutations that influence the way teachers learn and alter their classroom practices in developing country contexts.

Secondly, the developmental appraisal system is regarded as a direct means for improving the capacity of teachers to influence the quality of education in schools and classrooms (DoE, 1998). It addresses one of the most persistent criticisms of the flurry of education policy reforms since 1994, that is, that teacher preparation has been neglected in the rush to change the qualities of teaching and learning in schools (Jansen, 2001). But can teacher development, as conceptualised in DAS, actually improve or promote teacher learning? That is, can DAS provide teachers with the requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes for improving the quality of teaching and learning in South African classrooms?

Clearly the cascade model of teacher development, as conceptualised under Curriculum 2005, does not seem to have had a positive effect on teacher learning and student learning (Chisholm, 2000). The training paradigm that dominates the world of teachers' professional development has come under attack. Workshops are regarded as fragmented in content, form and continuity (Lohman & Woolf, 1998). Critics argue that most training places teachers in passive roles as consumers of knowledge produced elsewhere. The persistent use of the cascade system of implementation has exacerbated the gap between theory and practice. This is because teachers have been left on the periphery of the change process. Although teachers are told that they are agents of change, and are expected to use their professional knowledge to direct

change, in practice, they remain subject to bureaucratically imposed transformation processes.

Thirdly, most plans for restructuring tend to underestimate the multiple impacts of government policies. Since 1994, South African teachers work in macro-political context was dominated by new education policies. They experience policy overload and witness policy collisions between present reforms and predecessors' many remnants are still reflected in policy and habit. Darling-Hammond (1990: 240) reminds us that "policies do not land in a vacuum; they land on top of other policies". Furthermore, policy coherence is even undermined by many government policies that are contradictory.

This is clearly evident through what is currently taking place in South Africa. For example, WSE is being implemented almost simultaneously with DAS and the Performance Management Development System (PMDS), raising questions among teachers whether WSE will be replacing DAS. Adding to this complex reform environment, Curriculum 2005 runs concurrently with the old apartheid curriculum in grades 10-12. The apartheid curriculum appears to be competing with the new reform; and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) is the latest addition to this complex of reforms. This shows that complexity and ambiguity are inherent features of the ambitious reforms, making progress uneven and difficult to measure. Knapp et al. (1998: 412) believe that teachers then react with strategic, defence mechanisms such as passive resistance and selective attention to cope with the policy onslaught, which might negatively affect their learning. This scenario brings to light a pertinent question raised by Jansen (2001: 271) "What if the policy stated was not in the first instance intended to change practice"? My concern in this inquiry is to determine how teacher learning proceeds in such policy contexts.

Finally, research suggests that context plays a differentiating role in ways that teachers learn and respond to educational reforms (Lieberman, 1995; Scribner, 1999; Down, Chadbourne & Hogan, 2000). Teachers in different contexts have different quality profiles (qualifications, capacity, needs) and it is important to assess the effectiveness of DAS as an intervention in different contexts. The apartheid legacy has led to, among other things, uneven distribution of resources in schools. Teachers

in urban, rural and farm schools operate in varying contexts in terms of resources. For these reasons, I am researching the degree to which teachers learn in the different contextual conditions in which teacher development policies are implemented.

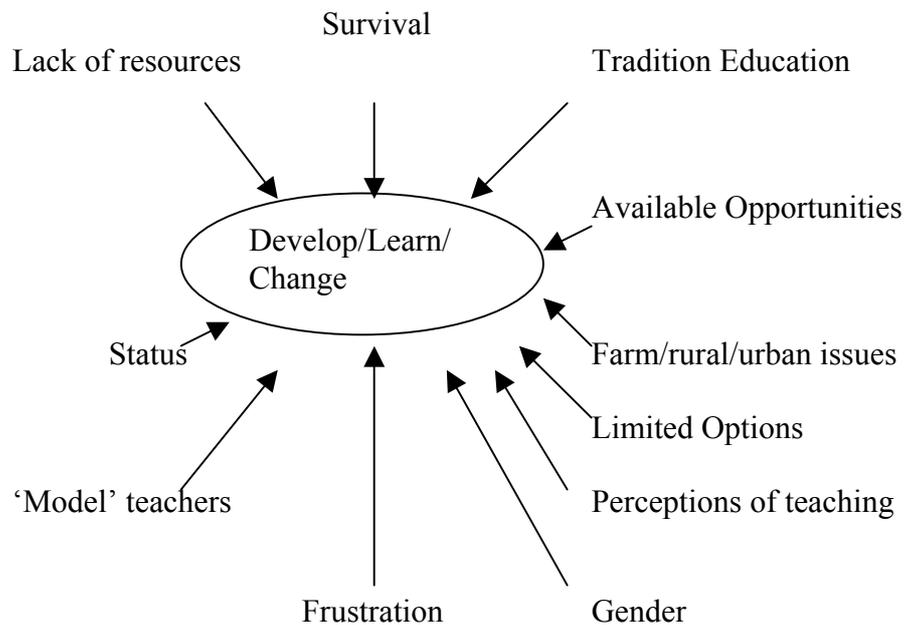
1.4 Conceptual Framework

The study draws on recent work on what is called “teacher learning” for the conceptual framework. Teacher learning is relatively new as an area of educational research. The assumption in this body of literature is that what is known about learning has referential equivalence among teachers as well as students.

Teacher learning can be explained from different perspectives. For example, there is learning as a reconstruction of personal images, learning shaped by and situated in professional identities and beliefs, reflection, professional communities and collegial relationships, organizational and structural contexts. According to Brown and Campione (1990), all learning is situated and has a specific focus on teacher learning. The situation is very important. However, there is a contention that when it comes to teacher learning and changing practices, situation is more complex than organizational arrangements. Learning can also be viewed from political, social and cultural standpoints because the nature of teachers’ work extends beyond the classroom and the school. Furthermore, teachers learn through a range of means such as active involvement in classroom activities, and experimentation with curriculum materials. Fullan (1997), Eraut (1994) and Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) describe these learning activities as the main source of professional development because teacher learning is linked mainly to the opportunities teachers encounter in their environment.

In addition, other factors such as resources, educational background, available opportunities, norms or values and perceptions of teaching can also influence a teacher’s ability to change and to learn. The problem as indicated by Jessop and Penny (1999) is that it has not been established as to how the factors influence each other and the nature of their interaction. What is significant about these factors is that they have provided a process of critique around the issue of teacher learning. (See Figure 2, p.12).

Figure 2: Factors influencing teachers' capacity to develop/ learn/change



Source: Jessop and Penny, 1999

It is important to note that opportunities for learning are both formal and informal. While much learning takes place incidentally, another aspect of knowledge acquisition is that informal learning which is deliberate and sustained can take place either alone or collectively. In support, Livingstone (1999: 4) says:

Explicit informal learning is distinguished from everyday perceptions, general socialization and more tacit informal learning by people's own conscious identification of the activity as significant learning. The important criteria that distinguish explicit informal learning are the retrospective recognition of both a new significant form of knowledge, understanding or skill acquired on your own initiative and also recognition of the process of acquisition.

It follows that one can appreciate the difficulties in attempting to research the ways and extent to which teacher learning takes place. On the other hand, consensus surrounding teacher learning today focuses on the importance of learning in context and acquiring knowledge that is relevant to one's professional context and directly linked to student learning (Sykes, 1999).

Teachers' personal theories have also been viewed as having a significant influence on almost all aspects of teachers' decisions about instruction. The question is: how does a teacher's theory of learning or beliefs about what causes learning to take place affect her/his teaching or evaluation practices? Furthermore, experience plays a role in a teacher's approach to learning opportunities provided. Teachers bring to the environment a major aspect of their own beliefs and practical knowledge, based on their own experience (Tillemma & Knol, 1997). This background is used as a frame of reference to enable teachers to value new knowledge. Goodson (1992) and Huberman (1995) have shown that experienced teachers often depart substantially from materials and design learning routes in line with their own conceptions. This depends to a great extent on the beliefs and knowledge of teachers from a professional perspective.

The choices teachers make in their respective classrooms are a result of antecedent conditions that include professional characteristics (Shavelson and Stern, 1981). This supports the view that teachers have their own unique set of instructional beliefs, thoughts and judgements that help to influence decisions they make. For example, years of teaching have a significant influence on what teachers believe, and thus influencing changes and decisions they take. Lewis and Peasah (2002: 3) argue, "We must not only ask what beliefs teachers bring to their profession, but ask whether they are desirable, how they change and the factors influencing the changes." Thus, while instruction is central to a teacher's life, it is necessary to acknowledge that the thoughts, beliefs and judgements of teachers may also be culturally bound. Little is known about the instructional thoughts, beliefs and preferences of teachers that are linked to the way a teacher learns.

The above reflections, although not exhaustive, highlight the complex process of what constitutes teacher learning. Through the conceptual framework, an attempt is made to trace the effects of the developmental appraisal system as a form of professional development on teacher learning.

1.5 Methodology

The study employs qualitative methods and procedures to trace the implementation of government policy (viz. the developmental appraisal system) on teacher development in different resource contexts, and the ways in which this policy influences teacher learning in these diverse contexts.

I conducted qualitative case studies of twelve teachers who have been involved in various phases of DAS. My unit of analysis is teachers. I also attempted to minimize factors that could impact negatively on the validity of my data. The selected teachers were articulate and expressive about DAS in terms of their own experiences and willing to talk about their own learning. Teachers were selected from different resource contexts and sampled on the basis of their different qualification profiles, working in diverse resource contexts, that is, from well resourced, averagely resourced to poorly resourced, and they have different levels of teaching experience. This kind of sampling allowed me to relate teacher learning qualitatively to teacher profiles and teaching resource contexts.

Guided by the main research question, I used teacher testimonies to assess the effects of DAS on teacher learning. Testimonies are narratives through which teachers relate their experiences in the form of stories. The narrative approach goes one step further in indicating that people understand their experiences and explain them through stories, featuring plots, times and places and therefore shaping action (Somers, 1994). The contextual understanding offered by the narrative accounts leads to new insights and the creation of knowledge and meanings that do inform professional practice. The narrative approach exists as a construction of knowledge through telling, recording, reading and analysing of stories of experience. Throughout the study, the inquiry process evolved as a kind of conversation in which teachers tell their stories. Thus, this inquiry is grounded in the notion of story as a framework that helps teachers to organize their personal experiences.

Finally, the teacher testimonies are composed qualitatively through the use of data collection strategies that inform and construct these testimonial accounts, that is, biographical data, free writing schedule, semi-structured interviews, teacher diaries

and critical incident reports. These strategies gave me an opportunity to work closely with a small number of teachers in different resource contexts to gain an understanding of the effects of DAS on teacher learning.

With reference to validity, I employed various strategies of cross-referencing and triangulation in order to allow teachers and myself to discover the meanings contained within the testimonial accounts.

1.6 Limitations

Although by conducting research of 12 teacher cases has given me an opportunity to elicit rich descriptions of their experiences through the narrative accounts, arguments have been raised about the fact that case study research tends not to provide reliable information on the generalizability of the findings.

The choice of three schools for the 12 teachers for in-depth case study can be cited as a limitation, given the importance of prolonged stay at the level of implementation. The distance between the selected schools further complicated the matter.

On the other hand, I also find the current popularity for story telling in research to be potentially problematic i.e., the idea of a story has implications of fiction and invention. This is supported by Wilson (2003:5) who says: “When all we have is a story, how certain can we be that it is a valid account”. The positive aspect of using story telling for the teacher cases is that the contextual understanding offered by the story telling approach can yield qualitative insights not easily obtained through more formal approaches to data collection.

What is also of concern are the “shows” teachers might put on during our interaction. Some of the teachers presented the experiences that they thought I wanted to hear in order to impress me. I had to engage them in further briefing sessions to give them more understanding and clarity about my study, and to emphasize that I was not conducting research for the Department of Education. This enabled them to relax.

The other limitation I had to contend with is linked to the disruptions and changes that characterized the implementation of DAS. The impact of the disruptions varied from school to school. For me, the concern is how these should be accommodated in the methodology (Palen and Vithal 1999). I raise this as an important issue because I started my study labouring under the assumption of stability. Again, the policy went through changes during its implementations i.e., amendments were made to one of the main instruments for teacher observation, linking DAS to WSE resulting in some schools not implementing DAS, and finally integrating DAS with WSE and PMDS.

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

The study is organized as follows:

Chapter one: Overview of the Study

In this introductory chapter, an overview of the study is provided outlining in detail the policy context for teacher developmental appraisal system as the focus of my study. The purpose of the study, the rationale, and the research question with regard to the study are provided. A brief outline of the conceptual framework, which guides the study, the research approach, and limitations are also explained.

Chapter Two: Literature Context for the Study

Guided by the one main research question, this chapter provides the broad knowledge base and key issues that help to shape this inquiry. The relationship between policy development and implementation is addressed through focus on teacher appraisal, teacher learning and changing classroom practices. This chapter also deals with contesting and divergent views regarding the relationship between teacher learning and appraisal by exploring strategies in both developed and developing countries.

Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework for Researching “Teacher Learning”

In this chapter, the conceptual framework that forms the main theoretical basis for the study is presented, guided by the main research question. The conceptual framework draws on what is called “teacher learning”, and is introduced through instances, relationships and theories of learning, which examine in detail the complexity of the process.

Chapter Four: Research Design on Teacher Learning

This chapter describes the research design and methodology I used to investigate the research question that guides the inquiry. Qualitative methods and procedures are employed to trace the implementation of government policy viz. DAS in different resource contexts and how the policy influences teacher learning in these contexts. The chapter also examines issues of validity and limitations of the study.

Chapter Five: Teacher Learning as Seen Through the Eyes of Teachers Working in Different Resource Contexts

This chapter deals with the analysis and presentation of findings based on the main research question viz. “the effects of developmental appraisal policy as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts”. This is done through the various methods I used in collecting data to compose the cases.

Chapter Six: Rethinking the Policy – Practice Relationship: The DAS Experience

Using the original data from this research, this chapter theorizes the implementation process, by exploring what happens between policy and practice with respect to teacher learning in a developing country context.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

2.1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to critically relate the study to the relevant literature in order to lay a foundation for the inquiry into the question posed, namely: what are the effects of the developmental appraisal policy on teacher learning as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts? The literature review clarifies the knowledge base for my study and highlights key issues and methodological tools that help to shape this inquiry. The review attempts to show evidence that teacher learning and development are indeed highly complex and multidimensional phenomena, and that initiatives such as appraisal have not established clear empirical explanations as to how such reforms influence teacher learning. The continuing character of the learning process and the fact that it is rooted in teachers' lives, make it very challenging to study. Furthermore, the illusive relationship between policy development and implementation is highlighted through a focus on teacher appraisal, teacher learning and changing classroom practices.

Through the literature exposition, I attempt to make a case for my study on how the implementation of government policy on teacher development in different contexts influences teacher learning in these diverse contexts. This chapter also seeks to summarize some of the key issues in the vast and diverse research literature on teacher learning, appraisal and development. The contextualization of key concepts such as appraisal, teacher development, professional development and teacher learning is done within the broad framework of educational change. This chapter also deals with contesting and divergent views regarding the relationship between teacher learning and teacher appraisal, between teacher learning and teachers' practices.

The literature also examines strategies employed in developed countries by drawing heavily from international theories and perspectives. A critical review of attempts by developing countries located within a broader socio-political framework examines research highlighting the successes or failures of the reform initiatives.

Educational reforms in post-apartheid South Africa have shown up several dilemmas with respect to teacher development, including the following:

- The complexity of proposed reform tasks, together with the absence of tested principles, policies and practices. These are coupled with contradictions across policies;
- The problem of fit between reform tasks and the prevailing models of professional development;
- The dominance of training paradigm built around knowledge production; and
- The relative inattention to teachers' opportunity to learn within their workday, which could be affected by the social organization of teachers' work in schools and their participation in a wider professional community (Archived Information, 1994).

Although the process of change is difficult and complex, it is important to understand how to facilitate it through pragmatic adaptations to specific contexts so that ongoing professional growth and improved practices are ensured.

This seems to be emphasized by the growing consensus among policymakers on the importance of improving teacher performance as a basis for improving learning gains among students. It is also worth noting that the developmental appraisal system assumes that teachers develop and learn through a series of support interventions. Thus the following questions are raised: Do teachers learn through such teacher development initiatives? Does appraisal improve teaching and learning, or is the impact on classroom practice too negligible?

Despite numerous efforts to reform schools, teachers' work has remained stable. This is supported by Kirtman (2002: 2) who indicates that "little has changed in the organizational structures, instructional practices and authority structures of teachers' work". The assumption is that this is due to the fact that much of teachers' work inside the classroom is largely independent and individually controlled. Elmore (1996) also theorizes that stability in teachers' work may be due to the fact that past reform initiatives have not successfully affected classroom practice. This point is

illustrated through past reform reports that tended to devote little attention to the implications that reform initiatives have for teachers' work, development and collegial relationships.

2.2 Conceptualisation of Key Terms Central to the Study

The concept "appraisal" can be explained from many perspectives because the definitions of appraisal tend to reflect the different purposes it is intended to serve. Poster and Poster (1997) see it as a continuous and systematic process intended to help teachers with their professional development and to ensure that the in-service training matches the complementary needs of teachers. In support of the above view, Valentine (1994) states that teacher appraisal can be explained as a process that may increase competency and effectiveness of teachers. Hargreaves (1994), as well as Buchanan and Khamis (1999), describe appraisal as a way of enhancing personal and professional development including the offering of moral support and the sharing of ideas. Teacher appraisal practices are widely seen as a means to increase accountability and professional development. Appraisal also refers to the approach used to deploy and establish performance plans, procedures to appraise performance, providing feedback about teacher performance, and assuring appropriate use of information in making decisions.

In the context of DAS, teacher appraisal is regarded as a process not only concerned with personal, professional development but also includes procedures for assessing the individual's performance in discharging specific responsibilities. Therefore, it is a positive way of promoting teacher development and enrichment as it embraces the act of reviewing and evaluating performance against described performance standards. The concept teacher appraisal or developmental appraisal is now widely used in South Africa. It can be seen as arising from moves to develop teachers as professionals and it reflects a climate in education characterised by concern for improved quality, accountability and efficiency. Thus, developmental appraisal is concerned with the procedures associated with effective teacher evaluation systems that identify practices associated with teacher performance and professional development. Developmental appraisal system is therefore a way of facilitating the personal and professional development of educators in order to improve the quality of teaching practices and

education (DoE, 1998). This means that teacher appraisal is a process designed to foster quality educational practices in schools through teacher improvement.

From the above explanations, it could be inferred that teacher appraisal is a form of teacher development, staff development, or professional development. Professional development is conceived of as a learning process resulting from the meaningful interaction between teacher and professional context in time and space (Kelchtermans, 2004). The appraisal intervention is expected to lead to changes in teachers' professional practice. Furthermore, teachers continue to learn in their job, learning from practice and becoming more experienced in their careers. Professional development thus implies learning by the teacher. The result of this learning is not only visible in professional practice but also in the way the teacher thinks about the "how" and "why" of that practice. On the other hand, Evans (2002: 128) expresses concern that the concept emanates from "the absence of a shared understanding that manifests itself as: threatened construct validity and difficulties in identifying the teacher development process".

The other concern emanates from the fundamentally normative and political question of what constitutes good professional development and who is to define it. Varying responses have been given to this question. For example, Clement and Vandenberghe (2000) identified core themes in professional development, namely: increased sense of control, a degree of flexibility, and increased capacity for accountability. Their argument is that these core themes can be used as formal indicators of professional learning. They stress the importance of personal relevance placed with the teacher on their learning, thus avoiding any normative stance about professional development.

Finally, even though the concept of professional development is largely in vogue, changes in practice have not necessarily kept pace with the change of concepts. The reality is that a different concept does not mean that conceptual differences between the old and new are understood and practised. This may be due to the fact that teachers face challenges when their attempts to change their practices conflict with deeply entrenched norms of teaching. Therefore, what is needed is not so much conceptual change, but change in beliefs that helps to modify perspectives and orientations in teacher knowledge (Pintrich, Marx and Boyle, 1993).

The overall concern is that policymakers and practitioners tend to think of professional development as the specific set of activities that provide teachers with in-service training once they have entered the profession. This limited view does not account for many factors that critically influence teachers' expertise, the way they learn and the quality of teaching.

Taking the above views into consideration, Bredeson's definition of teacher professional development is more useful for my study since it takes into account the aspect of teacher learning. He refers to professional development as "learning opportunities that engage teachers' creative and reflective capacities to strengthen their practice"(2001:3). In this conceptualisation, Bredeson, (2001) holds that professional development has to do with learning opportunities which may be formal or informal, individual or group and presented in various ways. He further points out that learning opportunities must engage teachers' creative and reflective capacities that is, learning opportunities must fit into their personal style and work context. Finally, strengthening teachers' practice will develop their understanding of their work and may lead to improved teaching practices.

What emerges from Bredeson's (2001) conceptualisation of teacher development is the significance of teacher learning. Teacher learning, as outlined briefly in Chapter One, can be explained from different perspectives. Bransford et al. (1999:1) examine opportunities for teacher learning in an attempt to highlight what teacher learning embraces. They point out that "understanding teachers' opportunities for learning, including the constraints on teachers' time is important for developing a realistic picture of possibilities for lifelong learning".

Firstly, teachers learn from practice. This implies that they gain knowledge and understanding of their students, schools, curriculum and teaching strategies through experiences gained as part of practice. Secondly, they learn through interaction with other teachers, and sometimes this occurs during formal and informal mentoring (Little, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In other instances teachers teach other teachers through formal in-service education, and during meetings of professional associations and teacher unions.

Thirdly, teachers learn from teacher educators in degree or graduate programmes and in specific teacher upgrading projects or programmes. This is done to acquire further qualifications and because in some cases the level of education is tied to a teacher's salary (Renyi, 1996). Finally, teachers also learn about teaching in ways that are different from their formal professional work. Through their roles as parents and related work in their communities, they learn about intellectual and moral development. In this study, "teacher learning" serves as the focal point in the conceptual framework; therefore, further perspectives on how it is viewed and explained are provided in Chapter Three.

2.3 Background and Development of Teacher Appraisal

The quality of education has been a major subject of debate in the world since the mid 1970s , and, given the centrality of teachers in the education process, it is surprising that teacher appraisal has not developed faster. The tentativeness in the development of appraisal has resulted from confused objectives and teachers' resistance to any approach that will reduce their professional status (Walsh, 1991). The problem also seemed to emanate from the fact that policies about teacher professional development were confused by lack of clarity of purpose and by unsatisfactory criteria used for decision-making (Stout, 1996). Research shows that professional development has not been the product of coherent policy, nor has it been systematically integrated with institutional priorities for curriculum and instructional improvement. This resulted in a situation where teacher development was seen as a basic tool for changing teacher behaviour and schools. Although this view is misplaced, it prevails (Stout, 1996).

The search for an effective appraisal system has been persistent and prolific over the last 50 years. The length of this search is one indicator that the desired teacher competency in performance appraisal is elusive (Doug, 1997: 269). This elusiveness may be traced in part to a lack of clear purpose that has plagued performance appraisal. This may be due to the fact that over the past years, policy about appraisal has not been guided by a single consistent purpose. Although interest in appraisal is long-standing, shifts of focus and authority have been common, reflecting a continuing uncertainty over purpose and discomfort about quality.

Teacher appraisal has a long history in different countries. Appraisal has often been a meaningless exercise, endured by both teachers and evaluators. In such instances, teacher evaluation is also regarded as a form of inspection, with no clear procedure for improving teacher performance, and it is judgemental. Reasons for wishing to evaluate the performance of teachers have varied from “personal desires for professional development to a state’s desire to pay teachers according to results of their teaching” (Humphreys, 1992:116). The systems chosen for teacher appraisal often reflected the interests of the end users other than the teachers themselves. There have also been widespread concerns regarding the quality of appraisals and their effectiveness.

It is thus important to recognise that the quality of education will be improved through different sources of pressure. The use of top down appraisal perspectives and performance indicators holds value for politicians and managers. Mortimore and Mortimore (1991) also voice a concern about the impact of the political dimension on teacher appraisal. They share the apprehension that when appraisal is seen as a way of managing staff, it overlooks the less tangible and isolated world of the teacher in the classroom. Many of the appraisal schemes that have emerged use management control to question the contribution teachers make to the quality of education.

Since its inception, teacher appraisal has raised the question regarding the extent it could contribute to the complex processes of professional development and the management of teachers. Bartlett (2000) saw conflict built into the aims of a procedure designed to assist in professional development and at the same time operate as a management tool which could identify those whose performance was below par. It was taken for granted that performance could be assessed. This led to a situation where the nature of teaching and the professional judgements involved were treated in an unproblematic manner. The teacher was seen as a technician who was, or was not up to the task.

Adding to such concerns is that there are few approaches to teacher appraisal that encourage individual teachers to take responsibility for their own needs analysis. Many examples of teacher appraisal use criteria that have been decided by persons other than those selected by the teachers themselves (Humphreys, 1992). The craft of

teaching can be difficult to measure given the unpredictability of the classroom environment. While it is widely accepted that there is a need to use externally generated criteria with which to assess teachers and their needs, it is important to accept that teachers need to define their own needs according to their own frames of reference.

Teacher appraisal practices are widely seen as a means to increase accountability. This tends to elicit irreconcilable tension, thus rendering appraisal not to be fully trusted by teachers. Evans and Tomlinson (1989) suggest that growing interest in teacher appraisal should not simply be attributed to a call for greater accountability and control of schools. It can also be linked to the growth of the school improvement movement. In the past, whole school approaches evolved, which facilitated the professional extension of teachers who had become self - critical, self - developing and optimistic for change. The above aspects were strengthened by the re-emergence of teacher appraisal as a major topic of discussion in the mid-1980s. During the re-emergence, basic strategies for teacher self-assessment were identified, namely, individual assessment based on personal reflection, analysis of classroom observation, and feedback from peer or advisory staff (Humphreys, 1992: 3).

Currently, appraisal practices are viewed from two perspectives. In the first perspective, traditional teacher evaluation practice aims at obtaining information about an individual's performance. The second represents an on-going process involving gathering information and providing feedback to individual teachers (Shrinkfield & Stufflebean, 1995). It is hoped here that this on-going evaluation will result in teacher growth and development. Darling-Hammond (1997: 4) supports the views by stating:

Teacher evaluation policies must be brought into line. The type of teaching expected in traditional teacher evaluation focuses on the transmission of information. Instead evaluation ought to focus on how well teachers are teaching for understanding.

Lately, teacher appraisal has re-emerged on the political agenda of several states as one of several perspectives on quality control in the education of learners. It became the panacea of reform efforts in the 1990s in many countries. A degree of consensus on the value of appraisal now seems to have developed, but there is still a good deal of suspicion, both of motives and methods (Walsh, 1991). Although the picture remains a patchy and an uneven one, in South Africa, there has been growing support for the introduction of developmental appraisal schemes. The momentum towards the introduction of developmental schemes of appraisal reflects a range of hopes and expectations.

Studies of appraisal indicate that it is most likely to succeed where there is an atmosphere of trust in the school, where people feel that they are valued and that their views are taken seriously. They also indicate that appraisal of teachers is easier to introduce in the context of an overall pattern in which there is regular reviewing of the school (Dean, 1991). It must be remembered that many teachers see the idea of appraisal as something of a threat. The fear of humiliation is one that bedevils the act of appraisal wherever it takes place, and the act of appraisal can force teachers to confront themselves in ways they would normally wish to avoid.

The arguments raised above highlight a tension that may exist between teacher appraisals and how teachers learn, which is likely to lead to improvement in practice. Educational reform in this area relies to a great extent on a balance between the two. This realization is very important for both policy implementation and practitioners since this will facilitate policy formulation and implementation. There is also need to be mindful of what Fullan (1997: 29) and specifically, Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995: 379), warn us against: “You cannot mandate what matters...because what really matters for complex goals of change are skills, creative thinking, committed action and engagement with innovation”.

2.4 Notions of Teacher Development

A teacher's development is a complex and ongoing process of personal and contextual interpretation. It occurs naturally and gradually as teachers act and interact within their personal, professional and social contexts. There are no universal truths about

which specific conditions or factors facilitate or constrain a teacher's development "because development is individually, not universally defined" (Cole, 1992: 374). Appropriate attention to the individual and the developmental context itself is likely to be more facilitative of development than is the prescription or implementation of institutionally standardized programmes, events and experiences.

Stout (1996:4) points out that a lack of policy focus in teacher professional development is confounded by the nature of the market system through which it is provided. Stout (1996) further asserts that the market is largely unregulated with respect to quality, though it is regulated in part with respect to form. This leads to absence of quality control because of both absence of a clearly understood purpose and the motive systems that induce teachers to participate in the various teacher development activities. Teacher development is a consumer market, albeit an imperfect one. The consumer market analogy is the proof of purchase, which can be redeemed for rebate.

The guiding principles for teacher learning are inherent in the notion that teacher professional development must cease to be an afterthought to systemic reform if reform efforts are to succeed (Houghton & Goren, 1995: 3). Emerging guidelines for teacher development include ongoing professional learning tied to new standards for curriculum, assessment and student performance; professional development connected to teacher work; school communities that foster shared learning and professional development which is integrated into the school schedule (Scribner, 1999). For this expanded notion of teacher professional development to be acquired, it will require examining institutional arrangements necessary for promoting ongoing teacher learning and assessing existing policies to determine their compatibility with new visions of teacher learning.

Professional development activities have assumed increased importance in the eyes of policymakers intent on improving teacher quality. The growing demands on teachers to improve performance in teaching has accelerated most recently with the development of performance indicators by the South African government. This is due to a growing realization of the central role of professional development of teachers in bringing about the desired reform (Norris, 1998; McInnis, 2000). If one looks at

professional development in relation to teacher appraisal in this study it would be interesting to find out the extent to which it promotes teacher learning and the overall improvement in teaching.

The conception of teacher development that yokes student-centred pedagogy and opportunities for teacher learning, supported by favourable and durable organizational conditions, is now being tried out in many places (Lieberman, 1995). This means that actual practices that promote teacher growth can be observed through the construction of a continuum that moves from direct teaching to practices that involve learning in and out of school. The change from teaching to learning is important because it implies that teacher development opportunities should become integral to the restructuring of schools. This will involve strategies and mechanisms that are more long-range, and that are concerned with interactions among teachers to promote learning and improvement in practice.

These concerns are supported by Darling-Hammond (1992:4) who insists that, “teacher development is not only the renewal of teaching, but it is also the renewal of schools”. In this view, professional development is a collaborative, on-going process in which the individual plays a meaningful role. Darling-Hammond also holds that “in the construction of professional development, we see the teacher as a reflective practitioner, someone who has a tacit knowledge base and who builds on that knowledge through ongoing inquiry and analysis, continually rethinking and re-evaluating her own needs and practices” (1992: 4).

As the importance of professional development in educational reform has become increasingly visible and recognized, traditional methods of professional development of teachers have come under severe attack as inadequate, inappropriate and out of tune with current research about how teachers learn and how expertise is developed (Fullan 1995; Guskey & Huberman 1995; Lieberman 1995; Miles 1995). This line of criticism is exemplified by Dass (1998:3) who dismisses traditional forms of professional development in which “everything is packaged into an afternoon or a full day in-service session which seems to be designed as a quick fix for teachers’ inadequacies and incompetence.” Sykes (1996) and Butler (1998) also point out that one-shot workshops as part of in-service education only support the industry of

consultants without much effect on what transpires inside schools and classrooms. They argue that much in-service training sees the teacher as a technician, a model that does not serve the developmental needs of the teacher.

Elmore (1995: 23) on the other hand points out that most school reformers and practitioners take it for granted that changes in structure produce changes in teaching practice, which in turn produce changes in student learning. Reform efforts aimed at improvement do not necessarily produce changes in teacher learning and student outcomes. But there is still need to be mindful of what Ancess (2000) emphasized: the importance of school improvements in the change process, and the fact that these are integral to the lives of teachers. This means that for my study, reform efforts such as teacher developmental appraisal policy need to be connected to teacher learning before it is possible to estimate any impact on classroom practice and teaching quality.

There remains the need therefore to focus on what McLaughlin and Oberman (1996) construct as a symbiotic relationship between teacher learning and education reform, a relationship where successful reform relies on continuous teacher learning and effective teacher learning relies on new approaches to teacher professional development, which in my study are linked to teacher appraisal.

2.5 The Relationship between Teacher Learning and Appraisal

Despite the attention paid to teacher professional development, the act and impact of teacher learning remains difficult to observe and even more daunting to measure. Research reported in this literature review supports this observation, suggesting that how teachers learn might not be easily captured through the implementation of policies such as DAS. What has also been highlighted through research is that the process of teacher learning is complex, elusive and ambiguous. Little is known about how teachers learn and to what extent learning on the job contributes to teacher development. This is supported by Elmore (1995); Fullan (1991); Newman & Associates (1996) and Peterson et al (1996) who argue that such knowledge, and attempts to plan or evaluate professional development are likely to be misdirected. In addition, there are differences in what learning means across particular settings, and

understanding the relationship between teacher learning and practice and teacher development becomes more complicated. Accordingly, observations as to how professional development can support teacher learning is a mix of fairly solid ideas, beliefs, myths and conjecture (Ball, 1996).

Hopkins and Howard (1991) highlight the fact that teacher appraisal does not exist in isolation, and does not occur in a vacuum. It is shaped by political, organizational, and instructional context in which it takes place, thus it is directly relevant to contextual needs. Its long-term impact seems likely to depend on how far it is integrated with other strategies that will promote, or contribute towards, positive teacher learning activities. On the other hand, the relationship between teacher appraisal and teacher learning is not easy to define. This is because the work of professional development is as uncertain as the practice itself. What teachers are presented with in terms of learning is criticized from a number of perspectives. There are also conflicting assumptions about the best way for teachers to learn, and these are affecting discussions about the importance of teacher appraisal.

There are arguments that appraisal brings together both staff development and performance review, and this signals the need to look at its impact on teacher learning. This need is addressed by efforts to reform schools that seek to develop not only new conceptions of teaching, learning and schooling, but also a wide variety of practices that support teacher learning. Therefore, if change is to be successful in terms of school improvement, it must be through the continuing development of teachers.

Cohen (1990) argues that when teachers are asked to change their practices, it is difficult for them to simply divorce themselves from routines, beliefs and practices, which have been ingrained in them over a number of years. As they reach out to practise a new innovation, they do so with their old professional behaviours, ideas and practices. Some of the inferences are that teachers face a formidable task in first understanding the new way of doing things. This entails the unlearning of the set traditional knowledge and skills, while at the same time learning the new. Taking these views into consideration, the question is: Will the implementation of the appraisal policy contribute to or encourage teacher learning or new ways of doing

things? It is important to highlight this because governments often do not recognize that for teachers, change is a difficult matter of learning the new innovation; instead government often operate with the simple assumption that they can alter teachers' practices through legislation.

The Departments of Education in the various provinces of South Africa performed linear and rigid cascade training and no sustained opportunity was created for the voices of the teachers to be fed back into the implementation process of DAS. This was done because of the widely accepted views that teacher learning takes place primarily at a series of workshops, at conferences, or with the help of consultants. This view places teacher learning within a narrow context of development. In this traditional view of teacher development, workshops and conferences conducted outside the school count, but authentic opportunities to learn from and with colleagues inside the school do not (Lieberman, 1995; Miles, 1995; Guskey and Huberman, 1995).

One important factor which is underestimated and which limits the extent to which teachers can learn through reform efforts like DAS, is policy and role overload. Teachers are expected to change their practices, learn and develop through the appraisal policy, but they also have to contend with the demands of Curriculum 2005, Norms and Standards for Educators, Whole School Evaluation, Systemic Evaluation and other education policies with their conflicting aims.

Teacher development activities also seem to assume that teachers learn best when they are passive recipients of knowledge from experts. This conflicts with the idea that teachers learn by actively constructing their own knowledge through participation in a learning community. One point of view is that teachers tend not to participate in most professional development activities and fail to appreciate its practices (Lamon, 1999). This is an indication that teacher appraisal as a form of teacher development may tend to produce little lasting change. Thus, in examining the relationship between teacher appraisal and teacher learning, it is important to consider the limitations of traditional approaches to teacher development and the new kinds of learning that are informing the field.

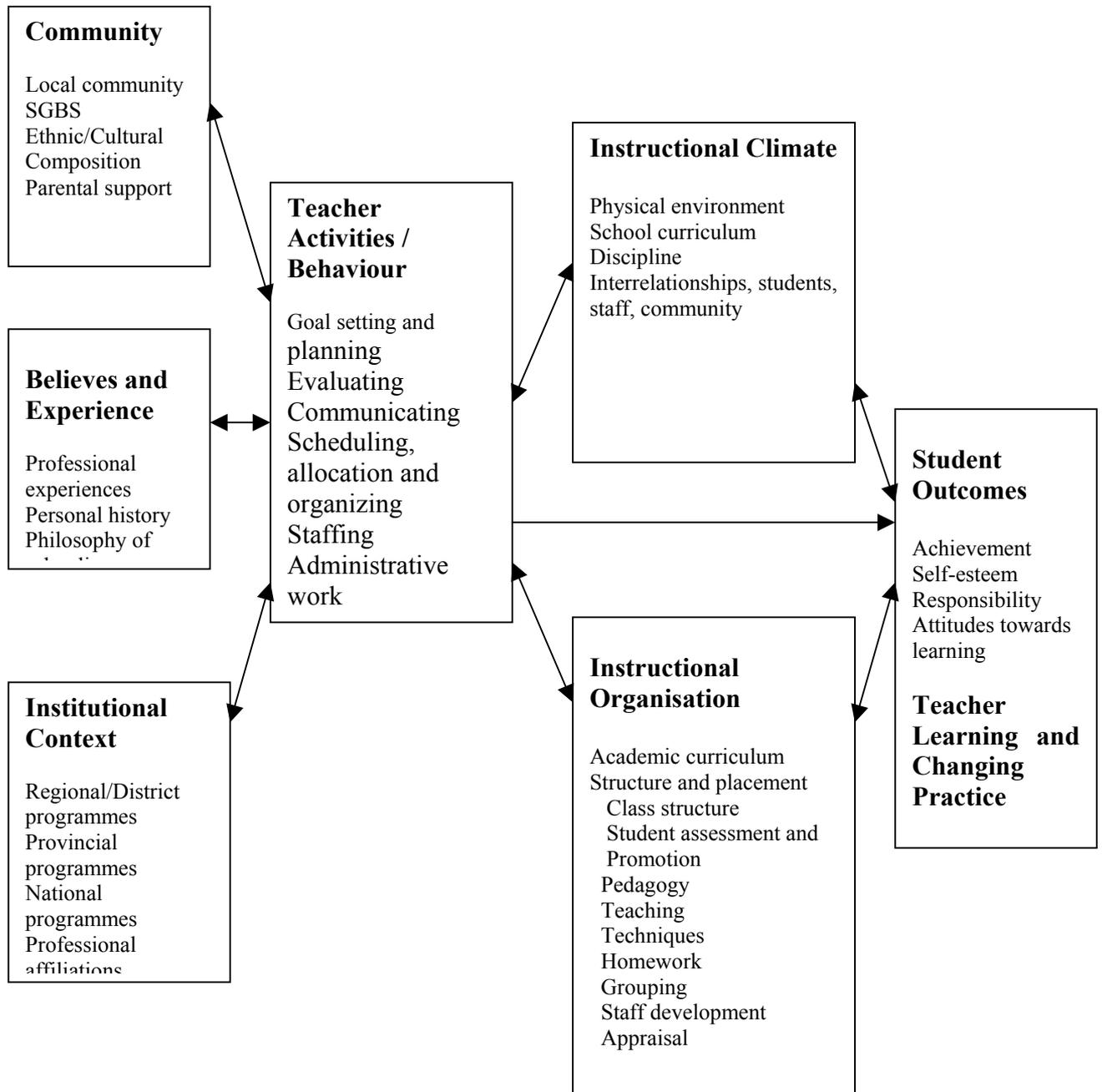
There is a growing body of evidence which shows the power of teacher professional development when it is viewed as an integral part of the way teachers learn (Nicholls, 1998). Part of this evidence has helped to deepen the understanding of how teachers acquire the experience that encourages them to grow and change in the context of school reform. It has also presented a link between teacher learning and teacher appraisal. Criticisms levelled against appraisal as a way of promoting teacher learning include the fact that it has not performed any better, because it is insufficient to sustain lifelong teacher development with opportunities for teacher learning. The focus is on actual practices that encourage teacher growth, moving from direct teaching to practices that involve learning.

2.6 Work Context Factors: Their Influence on Teacher Development and Learning

Context in its spatial meaning refers to the social, organizational and cultural environment in which teachers work (Scribner, 1999). This implies that we need to consider the multiple social interactions with colleagues, parents, principals, and students; contested norms and values, the culture of a particular school; policy decisions and measures that constitute the political and structural framework. These are all part of the context of the working conditions teachers have to deal with and they affect the way teachers learn and change classroom practices.

Johnson (1990) conceptualised teacher work as comprising multiple dimensions including political, economic, physical, organizational, psychological, cultural and social. This suggests that the workplace is a place where the structure of formal authority, organizational policies and procedures, and informal norms, which shape behaviours, beliefs and actions, converge. Matters are further complicated by the manner in which all these converge in any given school. (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Interactive Systems Influencing Teacher Learning and Practice



Source: Caldwell and Spinks (1998)

The illustration above captures important internal and external processes (instructional climate, instructional organization and community, beliefs and experiences, institutional context) and their influence on student outcomes as well as teacher learning and development.

What is significant about the various components in the framework is how they are affected by one another, due to the interrelationship. A backward mapping exercise can also be used to look at how individual components and their internal and external factors, impede or facilitate development and ability to achieve desired learning outcomes (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998). In exploring the components, teachers reveal their successes and usefulness and future areas that require improvement. This is important in highlighting appropriate professional development activities for teachers and the impact of new practices on student learning outcomes.

Teachers' professional development takes place within the context of a school, which is characterized by its organizational culture. Thus the classroom and the school occupy a crucial place in teachers' professional growth. It matters how the school organizes and promotes teachers' work and teacher learning. On the other hand, the teachers' personal meaning systems constantly interact with the school culture. These meanings will be perceived, interpreted and filtered by teachers and influence their professional behaviour and practice (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994: 49).

The arena in which teaching traditions and reforms confront one another directly and concretely is the school workplace. It is the most complex of domains in which teacher learning and professional development are played out. In support of the view, Hargreaves (1993) also recognizes that teachers' motivations and frustrations come from the immediate environment and complexity of the classroom and the circumstances in which they teach students.

It is thus important to highlight that the contexts in which teachers work and learn are multiple, varied and nested. Eraut's (1994) academic, school and classroom contexts are useful in describing the nested-ness of teacher work contexts and their influence on teacher learning. However, Scribner (1999) suggests that a complex nesting of work context is likely to limit the types of learning activities and knowledge available to teachers. In addressing contexts it is important to note that this is an environment about which teachers may do little that is, they have little choice in student population, live within an allocated budget if any, they also have to contend with the aspirations, angers and beliefs of the community that support the school. Again, the work place or the professional context is a venue for human growth and development.

As Wilson (1993: 71) noted, learning and knowing are integrally and inherently situated in the everyday world of human activity. This implies that the ability to acquire and use knowledge is highly dependent on context.

Therefore, different starting points for policy can be beneficial if the elements of the system are taken into account. It is thus critical for policymakers to consider coherence, context and the match between a policy's logic and the situation in which it will be applied (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999: 391). Numerous studies have confirmed the power of workplace norms to shape teacher development and learning. Describing the nature of teacher work has been the focus of some researchers (Eraut, 1994; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Huberman, 1993; Johnson, 1990; McLaughlin, 1993; Scribner, 1999 and Talbert & McLaughlin, 1996). Throughout the 1980's, studies have tried to illuminate the relationship between work conditions and professional learning.

Research on teachers' work lives reveal several working conditions that may promote or inhibit teacher development and learning. Smylie (1995) lists four conditions that may promote learning in the workplace. Firstly, opportunities for teachers to work together and learn from each other should be provided on an on-going basis. Secondly, working together in groups as colleagues in an open atmosphere that allow for assumptions and beliefs to be communicated and examined should be encouraged. Thirdly, there should be shared power and authority, as well as participatory decision making in the workplace. Finally, professional learning is also promoted by allowing teachers a certain degree of autonomy and choice. Although these aspects are regarded as important in contributing to teacher learning, it is necessary to understand in greater depth the complex, potentially interactive functional relationships of these conditions to learning (Smylie, 1995: 107). This means that the impact of working conditions on teachers' learning should not be viewed as a simple process of causal influence. It should rather be seen as mediated through interactive processes of interpretation and meaning.

In order to highlight these views on the importance of context for teacher learning, it is important to be mindful of what Ball (1996) points out as teacher formative experiences, teacher training experiences, teacher properties, school and classroom

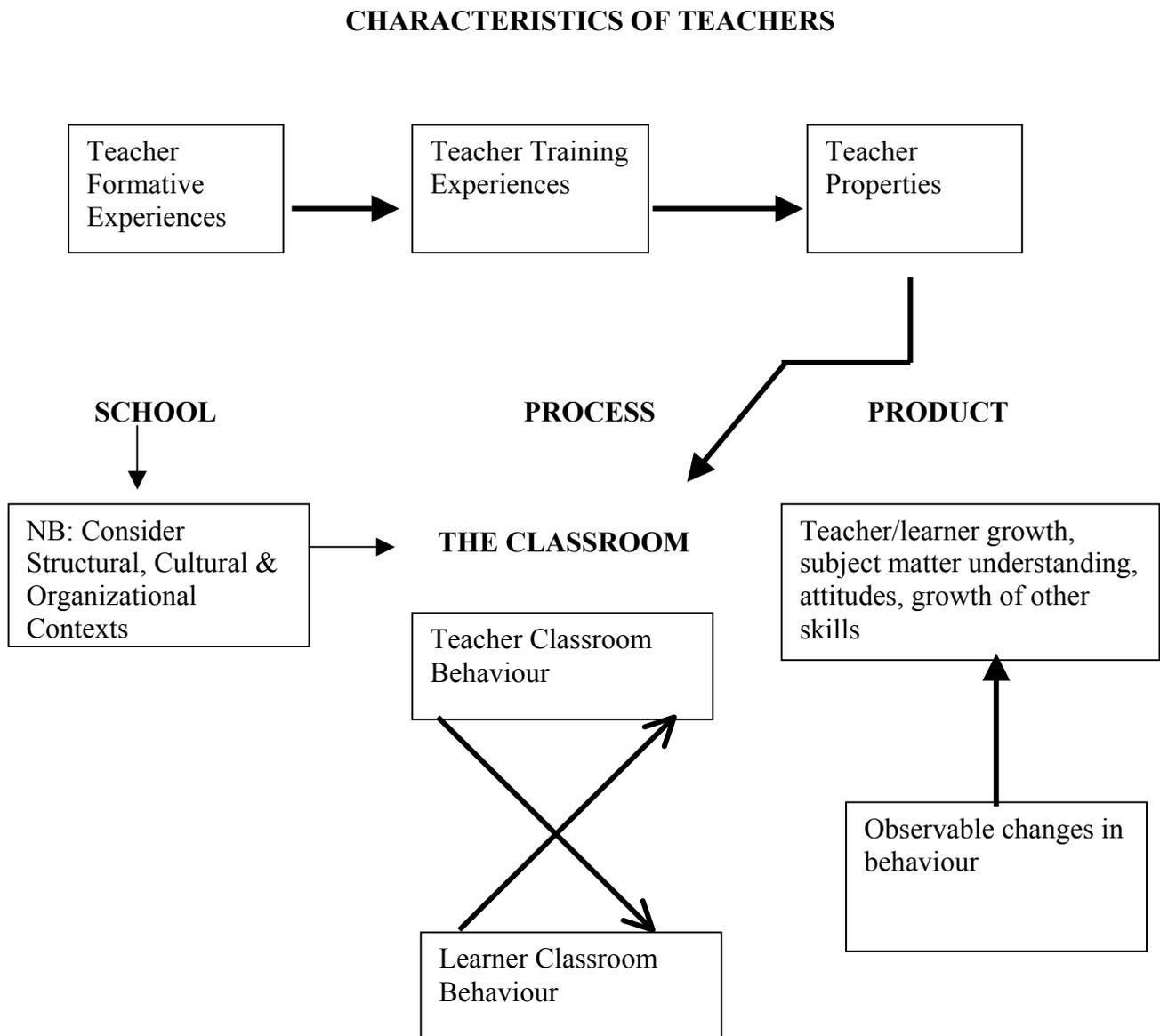
contexts. For instance, formative experiences include age, sex, teacher training experiences, university/college attended, the curriculum that was followed, practice teaching exposure, and in-service training. The following narration by a teacher serves as an example of how the variables can affect teacher development:

I didn't develop an intellectual interest in any subject whilst at school ... only factual fragments now remain ... though I do remember learning how to pass exams. Even literature never touched my experience although I liked the teacher and was successful in my exams. My understanding of my life and myself seemed limited to finding out what I was "good" at (Covey, 1999:133).

It is also important to note that teachers' lives have a significant impact on their development. According to Humphreys (1992), research shows that the personal biographies of teachers have an influence on their approach to appraisal and professional development. These can be linked to teacher characteristics such as the personal dispositions the teacher takes into the teaching-learning context and psychological aspects that is, abilities, attitudes, motivation and teaching skills. These properties are important because they are hypothetical constructs in psychology. They also characterise the individual teacher consistently over time and thus serve to explain behaviour in response to different situations. What is unique about the properties is that they are laid within the teacher and not amenable to direct observation in the same manner that behaviour can be observed (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974).

These teacher characteristics may be examined for their effects on classroom practice. They may lead to classification of teachers into ascribed positions within schools and are likely to provide positive teacher development or challenges for teacher learning. Ball (1996) further asserts that evidence is not yet available to prove that they are influential in determining teacher's classroom behaviour and ability to learn. Whether seen as a welcome challenge or not, teachers must cope with context and variables within this area which may affect classroom practice. The illustration that follows serves as a guide for understanding the complex process of teacher learning.

Figure 4: A Guide for Understanding “Teachers’ Professional Learning”



Source: Dunkin and Biddle (1974)

An understanding of the complex process of teacher learning may lead to a different starting point for policy, “ one that seeks to build the knowledge of practitioners to make sound judgements in non-routine situations rather than to prejudge and prescribe the actions they should take” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999: 394). This means that any form of teacher development must take into account the structural, cultural and organizational context in which teachers work. Although work like that of

Bell and Gilbert (1996) recognises the influence of the classroom in shaping teachers' behaviour, it does not address in a systematic way how different classroom conditions constrain the variety of classroom practice that is exhibited.

Research on the micro-politics of the school has started to disentangle the relationship between working context and professional development. It shows how the ongoing "process of negotiation, of power and influence, and the explicit and implicit attempt to control the working conditions" in a way determining whether and in what way teachers develop professionally and are likely to change classroom practice Kelchtermans (2004: 6). The moral and political aspects that affect teachers' lives are closely connected and add to the explanation as to why and under what conditions certain opportunities for professional development can be effectively taken up by teachers and turned into learning experiences.

Different perspectives exist on the relationship between teachers and their work context. One view indicates that teachers are constrained by their work context. The situational constraints inherent in teachers' workplaces shape teachers' dispositions, behaviours and actions (Scribner, 2003). For example, resources can support a status quo approach to practice in cases where the resources to support innovative ideas are non-existent. On the other hand, a more subtle constraint reflects the cultural and historical dimensions of school context. These contribute significantly to the formation of culturally based attitudes, preferences and dispositions.

Relationships that are formed, nurtured and dissolved in the professional context are also influenced by, and continue to influence, both the personal and professional growth of teachers (Cole, 1992). It is important to note that teachers working in similar work environments with identical constraints can act in different ways thus challenging the hegemonic view of teacher work context and its relationship to teacher action, behaviour and practice. These will impact on the widespread strategy of using mandates to legislate teaching practice assuming that there is one best answer to teaching problems rather than presuming that there are a variety of approaches to teaching that are differentially effective in different circumstances (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999). Therefore, it is essential to recognize that context matter for teaching and learning. Teachers need to shape their actions to fit the needs

of their students, the nature of their communities, and the demands of their subject matter.

The important role that context plays in learning also implies that formal training by itself cannot adequately prepare teachers for the complex and changing demands of their jobs. Findings by Scribner (1999) support the view that teachers experience their professional learning broadly, but work context can shape the possibilities of teacher learning in unique ways. It would be problematic to move from one extreme to another, from ‘decontextualized in-service training’ that is seldom applied in the workplace to complete reliance on learning from experience (Lohman & Woolf, 1998: 278). Thus progress toward fostering a culture of teacher learning in schools rests on understanding the integral relationship between formal and informal learning. Effective teacher preparation requires a form of professional development that engages teachers in the kinds of study, investigation and experimentation that will enable them to understand and deal with the complexities of the classroom and school.

Several authors provide a framework for gaining insight into how the context of teacher work might contribute to teacher learning (Eraut 1994, Scribner 1999, Talbert & McLaughlin 1996). McLaughlin (1993) asserts that students are the most prominent feature of the school as workplace. Teachers’ perceptions of their students are influenced by how they approached their work, policies and patterns of communication. Eraut (1994) saw a link between classroom context and teacher learning. He pointed out that teachers are in an environment where emphasis is on doing more than on knowing.

Therefore, they tend to rely on procedural knowledge that is acquired without reflecting. It implies that important knowledge that guides practice often remains tacit. In the isolation of the classroom, the validators of knowledge are teachers themselves and this is individual and not collective. Teachers need to make sense of reforms that are promulgated from the top. Thus, learning is sought to cope with external demands and not necessarily to expand the content expertise of teachers. Eraut (1994) also highlights the aspect of academic context, where teachers acquire propositional knowledge and where theories are made explicit. While knowledge acquired in the

academic context is arguably detached from practice, Eraut (1994) argues that it is not irrelevant to teachers because it has norms that support and expect learning to be a lifelong process.

In taking the above views into consideration, it can be inferred that professional development is critical for the preparation and continued growth of teachers. Together with the appraisal system, they aim at advancing the level of professional practice in order to promote good teaching practice. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), also support the view that professional development and appraisal system should provide opportunities for teachers to critically reflect on their practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy and learners. This implies that teachers need not only become knowledgeable about new concepts, ideas and models, but also need opportunities to learn from others how they can be applied in the real world. Therefore, emphasis must be placed on creating a school climate in which teacher learning occurs in context. Despite the rhetoric of collaboration, one major concern is that those who plan for appraisal and encouraging development often act on the basis of an overly rational conception of human behaviour. They seem not to realize that any change or development at an individual level involves learning, and learning is often difficult or uncomfortable.

Thus, in evaluating the success or failure of teacher appraisal policy in different contexts, it is essential to have a fair grasp of the dynamics of policy. Darling-Hammond (1998: 645) stresses the importance of this by stating that: “one of the toughest nuts to crack in educational change is policy itself... not this one or that policy but the basic way in which policy is conceived, developed and put in practice”. With reference to policy itself, Darling-Hammond can be helpful in understanding how certain reforms succeeded, failed or were never implemented. It may also assist in explaining the differences between policy intentions and actual effects.

It should also be emphasized that teacher development is not differentially distributed because of the inadequacies of individuals within the system. It is differentially distributed because of the variations in the systems within which teachers work.

2.7 Teacher Learning and Appraisal: Changing Teachers' Practices – Research Findings

Despite policy makers' intentions, changes in educational practice tend to lag behind the political demands and rhetoric surrounding educational reform (Heck et al, 2001: 303). In examining the implementation of policies, there are indications of educational practices that are resistant to mandates and directives of policy makers. This is supported by McLaughlin (1990) who argues that it is difficult for reform policy to change educational practice because the nature, amount and pace of change is a product of different factors that are largely out of the control of high-level policy makers.

Foulds (2002) also maintains that just changing policy, curriculum documents and materials cannot change classroom practice. There is need to look critically at existing classroom interaction and at the underlying values and interests of teachers.

There is also need to be mindful of the fact that political, social and professional conditions differ substantially, which makes teaching practices and teacher policies have different meanings and effects in different contexts (Spillane, 1994; Talbert and McLaughlin, 1994). Current literature on teacher appraisal and professional growth indicates that despite the official rhetoric of professional growth found in the policy, there is little evidence that efforts of this kind are effective in enhancing teachers' learning and their capacity to improve practice. Studies on teacher appraisal show that the impact of appraisal on teaching and learning has not been substantial. Research also shows that conventional professional development activities do not provide sufficient opportunities for teacher learning (Lohman & Woolf, 1998).

The above comments from the empirical studies are strengthened by the following views expressed by teachers during a study on teacher appraisal for professional development:

...I feel as if I don't understand what is going on ...
one moment I think that I have established what I
want to learn and I find I have to sit down and
redefine my professional needs (Humphreys, 1992:4)

The second teacher said:

...I'm feeling in a very resentful frame of mind...my mind is still in a turmoil...trying to sift through all the information, confusion and uncertainty I feel.
(Humphreys, 1992: 5)

The comments of these teachers sum up their feelings as they came to terms with appraisal in relation to their professional development.

On the whole, teachers continue to participate in teacher development initiatives, yet research evidence remains elusive, with no demonstrated link between teacher appraisal, learning and improvement. Stout (1996) argues that major work on the topic of teacher development emphasizes the failings of these efforts, which did not result in sustained changes in teaching behaviours. Over the years teachers have been able to adapt technique and curricula to changes in policy mandates. The question is: Can these be attributed to teacher development reform efforts such as appraisal? At more concrete levels, the evidence is much less certain. The quality of teacher development efforts is a major issue. Teachers have come to expect little because proofs of purchase continue to be available with no standards available to assess the activity. Stout further argues that there is no evidence to suggest a sensible policy decision about the amount of development needed to accomplish any given purpose. The problem of distribution is another concern that has emerged. Teachers in urban areas have choices and exposures, which teachers in remote areas do not have.

It is one thing for teachers to participate in and appreciate professional development experiences; it is quite another for their learning to be translated into classroom practice that makes a difference. The professional development area has many examples of learning experiences that do not connect particularly well with teachers' classroom practice. For example, there are faulty assumptions about how teachers learn, a lack of match between the pedagogy of professional development and the desired pedagogy in the classroom, a focus on generic skills that do not map onto the subject specific world in which teachers work, and failure to address issues and concerns about students that are most on teachers' minds (McLaughlin & Oberman, 1996: 384).

Many of the ideas proposed take the view that to change a teacher's classroom practice one must change what the teacher considers to be an appropriate pedagogic action. The emphasis is very much on developing teachers' knowledge so as to change their actions. The optimistic approach to the causal link is that changed thoughts cannot but lead to changed actions (Johnson et al, 2000). This assumption is unjustified because it is not enough to know what to do. Knowledge is a necessary condition for teachers to change their classroom practice, but it is not a sufficient one on its own. This situation adds to the complexity of the change process and to the need for strong professional development programmes.

In the USA, research conducted a decade ago focused on shedding light on why certain teacher evaluation systems were more effective than others. Wise et al (1984), conducted case studies in four school districts with different evaluation systems. These evaluation systems were set apart by common factors from the less successful ones despite the varying approaches prevalent in each. These factors are also found in literature on effective teacher evaluation systems linked to professional development by other researchers such as Duke and Stiggins (1991); Valentine (1992, 1994); Valentine and Harting (1994); Olivero (1993) and Gitlin & Smyth (1989), who linked teacher performance and development with school improvement, in the context of each school and region. These factors provide guidelines, which teachers may use to assess the strengths and weaknesses of any appraisal system, even in the changing South Africa and its diverse contexts.

An investigation conducted in Britain in 1996 found that observable improvements occurred in only 20% of schools and on a minor scale for the most part. On the whole, appraisal remained isolated from school development and planning. Even though teachers valued the recognition of their achievements through the process of appraisal and acknowledged that it enhanced their self-confidence and improved general morale, only a minority were able to identify improvements in their teaching as a result of appraisal (Down, Chadbourn & Hogan, 2000: 214). These findings are consistent with case studies of the Teacher Evaluation Policy Impact Project also conducted in 1996. They reported that teachers experienced evaluation as disconnected from their teaching, professional growth, and the ongoing process of school curriculum change and development (Clandinin et al, 1996: 182). Furthermore,

developmental appraisal largely failed because of lack of resources. It was also seen to be out of tune with performance management strategy that dominated education policy at the turn of the century (Gunter, 2002).

Research conducted in Australia on a teacher appraisal scheme, namely, Victoria's Professional Recognition Programme (PRP), found that "the majority of teachers could not cite a single instance of where their work with students in the classroom had changed as a result of PRP, and did not expect that it would" (Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 1997: 61). On the other hand, when teachers were asked to describe any changes in classroom practice and instances of learning, some teachers indicated that the appraisal process formalized changes they would have made anyway through their own professional commitment.

In addition, when they were asked to relate instances of learning that really made a difference, they were able to tell stories of their experiences. For them, learning was non-structured and informal, spontaneous and focussed on the learner. Relations founded on the values of trust, honesty and mutual respect also influenced it. This implies that their learning was embedded in the context of their classrooms and their meaningful interaction with the learners. What the teachers highlighted also confirmed that interacting and sharing with others is a critical factor to professional development, which contributes to their learning within a professional community.

In South Africa, research findings have been compared to teachers' views in courses presented at the Bachelor of Education (BEd) level at the University of Western Cape (UWC) on Teacher Effectiveness and Teacher Evaluation from 1989 to 1994, (Jantjies, 1994). Again, at UWC a Teacher In-service Project conducted workshops and held discussions with numerous teachers and principals in the Western Cape region and in the Southern Cape region on Alternative Appraisal systems during 1993-1994. Educators expressed very specific ideas, such as, "teachers would like a friendly appraisal system, in contrast to the prescribed top-down approaches of the past, and it should be a transparent system: the teacher should have the right to question assessment, to get a better understanding of how to develop and to improve actively, and how to be involved in organizing the system at school level" (Jantjies, 1996: 52).

On the whole, teachers in developing countries are obviously much more constrained by a somewhat different set of circumstances i.e. the poverty of material resources and lack of classrooms, than those in Europe or North America, for instance. One cannot re-conceptualise a chalkboard that does not exist. The mechanisms by which teachers in systems at the early stages of development change their practice cannot be primarily through conversations.

In further exploring teachers' professional development and specifically pedagogical practices in developing countries, for example, sub-Sahara situation, one is confronted by a different situation altogether. What is evident is that teachers' actions are seriously constrained by their classroom environments, namely poverty of resources. Conclusions on a study by Johnson et al (2000) point out that in Egypt, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe teacher change and development do not reflect what is found in practice. Attempts to address teachers changing their classroom practice are based on ideas developed out of northern/western experiences, which are not appropriate for their contexts. These findings also add to the problem of clearly highlighting the complex process of teacher learning in these contexts.

deClerq (1997) also points out the following regarding educational policy implementation in developing countries: Policy implementation in developing countries has not received adequate analytical attention, and aspects of the processes involved are still not yet well understood. The other problem is the failure of policy makers to take into account the realities of the classrooms within which teachers work. Thus the situation in developing countries appears to be negative because of the following: schools still employing unqualified and under-qualified teachers, teacher-isolation even during in-service training courses there is limited contact with colleagues, lack of motivation, and inadequate teaching resources. This means that in-service training aimed at professional development needs to be structured differently to target these teachers. There is, therefore, a greater burden on developing countries to ensure that policy implementation achieves intended goals within education systems.

According to Gray (1999) alternative strategies for teacher development are emerging in South Africa. He indicates that findings from a study in Cape Town schools with large classes suggest that teacher development can be sustained through real participation of those involved. This needs to be supported by pedagogical change to local conditions and prioritising resource allocation. On the other hand, teacher appraisal policies appear to have replicated teachers' managerial mechanisms of control in the context of large class sizes and increased teacher workloads (Chisholm, 1999). Adding to the concern raised by Chisholm is the problem of disempowerment of teachers at the time when new professional demands are made on them (Jansen, 2001). The picture portrayed above shows that addressing the issue of teacher learning in this context is both complex and challenging.

Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1990) argue that research that addresses change from a position that sees the teacher as a learner has had a short history. The underlying conception of teachers' learning dates from the time of Dewey as far back as 1929, 1933 and 1944 who emphasised the importance of teachers reflecting on their practices and developing their own theories of teaching and learning based on their observations of children in classrooms. More recently, Dewey's notion of the role of reflection on practice as necessary for teachers to become generators of knowledge has been reconstructed and modified in the works of Schon in 1983 and 1987.

Based on the above discussions, there are suggestions that, attempts to reform the education system; the professional development of the teacher in particular, have led to tinkering, add-on programmes and marginal improvements. Regardless of whether these practices are necessary and beneficial, critics view this as a demonstration of governments to exert greater power and control over teachers' lives. On the other hand, Smyth (1996) argues that while new democratic models of teacher evaluation challenge older bureaucratic and judgemental approaches, they are far from innocent, and the discourse of participation, collegiality, teamwork and partnership are not what they seem at first glance. Smyth and Shacklock (1998) further point out that policy initiatives of this nature are usually sold differently depending upon the audience. For example, in the context of this study, the policy appears to speak to government officials in terms such as accountability, achievement, and meeting standards, while

on the other hand, it appeals to teachers' professional conscience through notions of growth and development, collaboration and self-reflection.

Although the research base on teacher professional development is extensive, it has documented inadequacies of professional development and occasionally proposed solutions (Epstein, Lockard & Dauber, 1988; Orlich, 1989; Wood & Thompson, 1993). Reformers attempting to make sense of these various solutions find themselves faced with seemingly incompatible dichotomies. Stout (1996: 6) summarizes by saying "teacher development efforts continue and expand based on the assumption of benefit to the public. The system rumbles on, unchecked and effectively unexamined".

In evaluating the overall implementation and impact on teacher development, the conclusion is that teacher appraisal reforms lack the capacity to provide them with an idea of what to get better at. Teachers therefore see this as an ineffective form of professional development, which does not validly assess the quality of their work, and falls short of offering teachers adequate incentives to improve their performance.

2.8 Synthesis

What has been highlighted through the literature review is the problem of fit between reform tasks and implementation especially with the prevailing models of teacher professional development. Reform efforts give little attention to the implications that these initiatives have for teachers' opportunity to develop and to learn. In looking at the concept professional development, despite the various perspectives, there is absence of a shared understanding making it difficult to identify the teacher development process. It is evident that changes in practice have not necessarily kept pace with the changing concepts. Research shows that what is needed is change in beliefs which will modify perspectives and orientations in teacher knowledge. Again, the limited view about what constitutes professional development does not take into account the various factors that influence teachers' expertise, classroom practice and the way they learn.

Professional development has not been the product of a coherent policy, thus teacher development is seen as a basic tool for changing teacher behaviour and schools. Lack of policy focus in teacher professional development is influenced by nature of the market system in which it is provided. Therefore, in evaluating the success or failure of appraisal policy in different contexts, it is important to consider how policy is conceived, developed and put into practice. Changing policy and curriculum documents does not necessarily promote teacher development and learning.

On the whole, one of the most critical issues highlighted is the fact that teacher development and learning are complex and ongoing processes, which are characterized by the personal and contextual interpretations and are individually defined.

Therefore, teacher appraisal needs to be connected to teacher learning and practice in order to have an effect on teacher learning, student outcomes, classroom practice and the quality of teaching. Research shows that, if reform efforts are to be made operational thus enabling teachers to really change the way they work, then teachers must have opportunities to discuss, think about, and try out new practices. This means that they must be involved in learning about, developing and using new ideas with their students.

Finally, there seems to be a general agreement among education reformers that teacher development is central to education reform and instructional improvement. The problem, as Elmore and Burney (1997) put it, is that, it appears that little is known about how to organize successful professional development so as to influence classroom practice.

CHAPTER THREE

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHING “TEACHER LEARNING”

3.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I outline the conceptual framework that outlines the central construct deployed in this study namely, teacher learning. The conceptual framework has three functions. First, it has a descriptive function in that the framework elaborates and assigns content to this relatively new concept in teacher education research. Second, the framework has an empirical function in that it offers a precise meaning to the concept in order to facilitate an estimation of its achievement. And third, it has an explanatory purpose in that the framework explains the extent to which teacher appraisal policy impacts on teacher learning.

The conceptual framework of the study draws on recent work on what is called “teacher learning”. Darling-Hammond (1999) argues that educational innovations that seek to foster deeper learner understanding can only succeed if teachers are portrayed as active learners in the process of change. Drake et al (2001) point out that when teachers change their practices in ways that are consistent with set standards, they also decide to change who they are as learners and as teachers; they embark on a process of re-forming their identities.

3.2 Conceptualisation of Teacher learning

Teacher learning is defined in various ways. According to Tobin and Jakubowski (1990) and Shaw et al (1990), teacher learning is a process of change that involves teachers in reconstructing personal images of teaching and learning. Teachers refer to the mental images constructed over years of experience, to make sense of the new teaching roles required of them. Personal images of teaching and learning as a construct influence practices of teachers. Through reflection, they compare their own teaching with these ideal images and then make changes in their practices that are consistent with ideal images. These images will be constructed through new knowledge influenced by individual, social and cultural factors, which will lead to the

creation of a personal curriculum for learning. Engaging in reflective practice implies that one considers not only one's action and its consequences, but the beliefs, values and other knowledge, which contribute to motivating and creating a rationale for that action. The teacher in this case engages in critically examining cognitive constructs that represent how the teacher makes sense of experiences.

What and how teachers learn is shaped by and situated in their identities, both as teachers and as learners. Teachers' identities refer to their sense of self as well as their knowledge and beliefs, dispositions, interests and orientation towards work and change (Drake et al, 2001: 2). Thus, when teachers are considered as learners, it is not surprising to find that individual teachers exposed to identical reform programmes will respond differently depending in part on the dispositions and beliefs which are embedded in their identities as teachers and as learners.

Briscoe (1996: 326) states that often teachers' beliefs are not consistent with beliefs implied in an innovation. Thus, the teacher may reconstruct the innovation to match his/her own beliefs, knowledge and skills. On the other hand, when a teacher's beliefs conflict with those implicit in an innovation, his/her personal knowledge and skill structures may be reconstructed. This notion is endorsed by Putnam and Borko (1998) who declare that teachers interpret the new demands through the filters of their existing knowledge and beliefs. Based on the views presented, the theoretical perspective will derive from Schon's (1987) idea that classroom practice relies on the reflective wisdom of individual teachers.

This is supported by the distinction made by Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994: 58), between espoused theory and theory in use. Teachers' professional behaviour is determined to a great extent by the theories of action. Through reflection this theory can be thematized and made more explicit. What people say they do and why often differs from the theory in use, the theory of action that can be inferred interpretatively by observing actual behaviour. Through the confrontation of espoused theory and theory in use teachers can learn to act more effectively. They can become more aware of their theory in use and direct their behaviour more successfully.

It is important to acknowledge that the relationship between reflection and action remains very complex. The interplay of professional self and subjective theory on the one hand, and concrete professional behaviour on the other, is not to be understood purely, in terms of intentionality. “Human behaviour cannot be explained completely by understanding its subjective meaning for the person involved. This meaning is not only constituted by the intentions of the actor, but also by unconscious motives and latent structures of meaning that exist independently from the actor’s consciousness” (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994: 58).

Mulford (1998: 623) states that in contrast to the common strategy of a transferable package of knowledge to be distributed to teachers in bite-sized pieces, people learn best through active involvement, thinking about and becoming articulate about what they have learned. This reflective practice implies that teachers consider not only their actions and their consequences, but also their beliefs, values and other knowledge, which contributed to the rationale for that action (Briscoe, 1996: 315). It is hoped that as they critically and constructively interrogate their own practices, they will come to see the gap and how it differs from those espoused by the innovation and make the necessary adaptations.

Therefore, the concepts of teachers’ personal interpretative framework (professional self and subjective theory) are in line with the arguments from the constructivist perspective on teacher learning and teacher thinking research. The core idea of teacher learning is that knowledge is a result of the interactive interpretation and construction process in which experiences, new knowledge and observations are compared to and analysed from the already existing mental frames. On the other hand, the central premise that is highlighted in several teacher thinking studies is that teachers’ actions are partly guided and influenced by their thinking (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Richardson & Placier, 2001). Therefore, in conceptualising the teacher learning process, it is necessary to include the close link of teachers’ actions in their work and the validity of the beliefs and knowledge underlying them. It is also important to highlight that “teachers’ knowledge is personal, context-rich and elusive” (Russell & Bullock, 1999:132).

Teacher learning can also be explained from a very popular social constructivist paradigm. According to constructivism, learning involves “construction and transformation of knowledge as sensory input interpreted in light of what is already known” (Briscoe, 1996: 316). This implies that the knowledge constructed by the individual has an adaptive function that will enable teachers to cope with experiences, to communicate and to function socially. It also views individuals as active learners or constructors of understandings who make sense of the world by interpreting it through existing knowledge, skills and beliefs.

This shows that teacher learning goes beyond providing stimulation and encouragement for individual construction of knowledge. The very way a person thinks and reasons is shaped largely through interactions with others. This socio-centric view, according to Putnam and Borko (1998: 1241), accepts the centrality of the individual in learning, but also takes into account the cultural nature of knowledge as a communal human construction that is formed by human beings. This further supports the view that the learning process is also a social one, which is a matter of enculturation into particular ways of thinking and dispositions. The social constructivist view of learning means that other persons play the role of model and supporter for learning to take place. Individuals learn through observation of and interaction with more knowledgeable members of the culture, appropriating for themselves new ways of thinking.

For purpose of this inquiry the conceptualisation that views teacher learning as a process of change involving a reconstruction of learning that is influenced by a teacher’s beliefs, identify, knowledge, ability to engage in reflection, collaboration and collegial relationships will be used as a working definition. Through the process, teachers interpret the experiences through what they already know. This may not be the best way of looking at teacher learning, but in this inquiry, these key aspects tend to affect teacher development in significant ways.

For teachers, the emerging image of the constructivist classroom has been problematic because constructivism is a theory of how individuals learn. When this learning theory is applied to an instructional theory, and the instructional theory is applied to classroom practice, much fails to translate (Windschitl, 1999: 190). Teachers are only

beginning to understand some of the general classroom conditions that encourage the creation and restructuring of knowledge. In support of Briscoe's explanation, Webb (1996: 305) describes teacher learning as a "social process of knowledge construction and reconstruction by teachers and students in the contexts of their own classrooms and their daily lives". This is contrasted with the imposed systems of teacher evaluation that ignore, deny, and devalue teachers' personal practical knowledge.

Putnam and Borko (1998: 1228) also view teacher learning as an active process in which teachers interpret experiences through their existing conceptual structures. It also involves their individual constructive efforts, which are important for emphasizing the central role of personal engagement in the learning process. They support the view that most knowledge is an interpretation of experience, an interpretation based on schema that both enable and constrain an individual's processes of sense - making. Put more succinctly, teachers interpret and make sense of new practices only through the lenses of what they already know. Integral to the constructivist notion of learning is that teacher learning is influenced and shaped by both reflection and social interactions. It requires a considerable amount of self-reflexivity, in which teachers continuously hold up their own progress to intensive scrutiny and self - analysis.

Given the above explanations, Cobb (1994), maintains that the individual and social constructivist views of learning should be seen as complementary perspectives, one focusing on the sense making of individuals within a social context, and the other focusing on the social context and how it shapes individual thinking and learning. Therefore teachers can construct personal meanings only in the context of the ideas, conceptual tools, and modes of thought provided by the social environment and discourse.

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) argue for the sociological perspective by stating that for teachers to rise successfully to the challenge of adapting their practices to meet the expectations of the recent national reform agenda, they need opportunities to participate in a professional community that discusses new teacher materials and strategies that support struggles entailed in transforming practice. The professional learning community helps in breaking through the walls of individualism and isolation

that characterise the professional lives of most teachers. This means changing the nature of discourse among teachers in the schools by fostering strong collegiality, collaboration, and open dialogue that will pave the way for continuous teacher learning and improved professional self. This is important because teacher learning involves learning new ways of thinking and reflecting about their practice and simultaneously creating new forms of discourse for talking about teaching.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that collegiality and collaboration in the professional learning communities can both affect teacher development in positive and negative ways (Hargreaves, 1993; Little, 1990). Some interpersonal ties in schools limited or destroyed teachers' opportunities for professional development and organizational learning. This is because collaboration in itself is not the most promising path in terms of professional development. It is rather a positive balancing of collegial collaborative work on the one hand and individual autonomous work on the other that works that way (Clement & Vandenberghe, 2000). This implies that the balance takes different forms in different schools for different teachers. Achinstein (2002), in her research on the role of conflict in schools found that close collegial communities in schools could block off opportunities for growth and development if they exclude conflict, which is central to community.

During earlier eras of school reform, a phenomenon that was little appreciated is that professional communities are key agents in shaping teachers' norms and knowledge and in sustaining change. The development of viable professional communities within and across schools holds much promise for supporting teachers' growth and development (Firestone & Pennell, 1995). Therefore, the formation, sustenance, and life cycle of such communities as well as their import for student learning bear careful consideration as a focus of teacher policy.

3.3 Theories of Teacher Learning

Teachers' personal theories of learning have also been viewed as having a major influence on virtually all aspects of teachers' decisions about instruction. Not only one's expectations for what learning outcomes are to be valued and sought, but also how one plans instruction is directly affected by one's beliefs about learning. In

addition, teachers' views of learning guide them as they make decisions about appropriate means of implementing and assessing instruction (Applefield et al, 2001). Martin et al (2002: 116) also support the views that teachers have prior practical theories and conceptual perspectives that influence their responses to change efforts. Theories are regarded as useful and powerful when they help teachers in the sense-making process, especially in different situations by offering insights.

It is thus important to look at their link with practice. As Vithal (2002: 3) points out, "all senses of theory are in part defined through contrast with practice. The dialectic between theory and practice reflects a tension between life as lived and life as understood". For teachers, theories offer different meanings in their work contexts. So, through reflection they can give insights that can advance the theories and their practices.

Therefore, to assume that teachers will have to learn so that they can implement reforms leaves much unspecified and underexposed. This is because learning can be conceptualised in different way as shown in earlier discussions. Learning in general, and teacher learning in particular, means different things depending on one's conceptual perspective (Richardson, 1999). In support, Darling-Hammond (1999: 37) also points out that "while there is substantial testimony that teachers learn by participating in different activities, we do not know exactly what kind of learning takes place, under what circumstances, and how it can be harnessed to the cause of sustained professional development and improvements in teaching". Thus, since implementation involves learning, it is necessary to probe the nature of learning. In an attempt to address that, it is important to look at theories of learning using a typology developed by Greeno, Collins and Resnick (1996). They identified three theoretical perspectives on cognition and learning – behaviourism, cognitive view and the situative – sociohistoric view (See Table 1, p.57).

Firstly, the behaviourist perspective (associated with BF Skinner) holds the view that behaviour is concerned with actions as the sites of knowing, teaching and learning. They further indicate that learning is externally motivated by reward and requires developing correct reactions to external stimuli.

Secondly, the cognitive perspective (associated with Piaget) holds the view that knowledge includes reflection, conceptual growth and understanding, problem solving and reasoning. Thus, learning involves the active reconstruction of existing knowledge structures. Teachers use personal resources i.e. prior knowledge and experiences to construct new knowledge (Confrey, 1990). In this perspective, engagement with learning is seen as natural and personal. This view of learning is also seen as resembling what Richardson (1999) calls normative-re-education perspective on teacher learning, in which change is possible through reflection on one's beliefs and knowledge.

Finally, the situative – sociohistoric perspective (Pea, 1993; Resnick, 1991), holds the view that individuals are inseparable from their communities and environments. This perspective regards knowledge as distributed in the social, material and cultural artefacts of the environment. Thus, the ability of individuals to participate in the practices of communities embraces knowing on their part. For this perspective, learning involves developing practices and abilities valued in specific communities and situations. The motivation to engage in learning is viewed in terms of developing and sustaining identities, in this case, teachers' identities in the communities in which they participate. In order to encourage participation in practices of inquiry and learning, it is important to organize learning opportunities so that they can support the teacher's identity as skilled inquirer and him/her to improve practice.

Although the perspectives are used in an attempt to understand and explain teacher learning, there is need to acknowledge that learning is difficult, both for the teachers and for those who teach them. This may be due to the fact that new content and pedagogy represents a tremendous shift from how teachers now teach and how they learned in school, college or university. On the other hand, the structure of teacher knowledge is a complex web of experiences from inside and outside the classroom. Equally complex are the ways this knowledge is developed. Furthermore, the government's support of teachers' learning through policy initiatives such as DAS will depend not only on their understanding of ideas advanced through these reforms but also on their ideas about communicating these understandings to teachers i.e. their beliefs about and knowledge of teacher learning. For example, one's understanding of a policy message does not ensure that one can help others understand that message.

Table 1. Theories of Teacher Learning

	Behaviourist	Cognitive	Situated
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Transmission of knowledge - Passive learner, listening and watching - Learner understood in terms of preferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating opportunities for teacher reflection on practice - Reconstructing existing knowledge - Learner as individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge construction - Key role of teachers - Active learner - Social aspects of learning are emphasized
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad spectrum of integrated topics - Reliance on external providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrow array of topics integrated around implementing reform - Internal and external providers - Local curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topics integrated around implementing reform - Internal and external providers - Curriculum stretched across the board including teachers' practice
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extrinsic - Combination of rewards and sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extrinsic and intrinsic - Focused on individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social rather than individualistic - Linked to teachers' identities as inquirers

Source: Spillane, (2002)

3.4 How Teacher Learning as a Conceptual Frame Adds Value to The Study

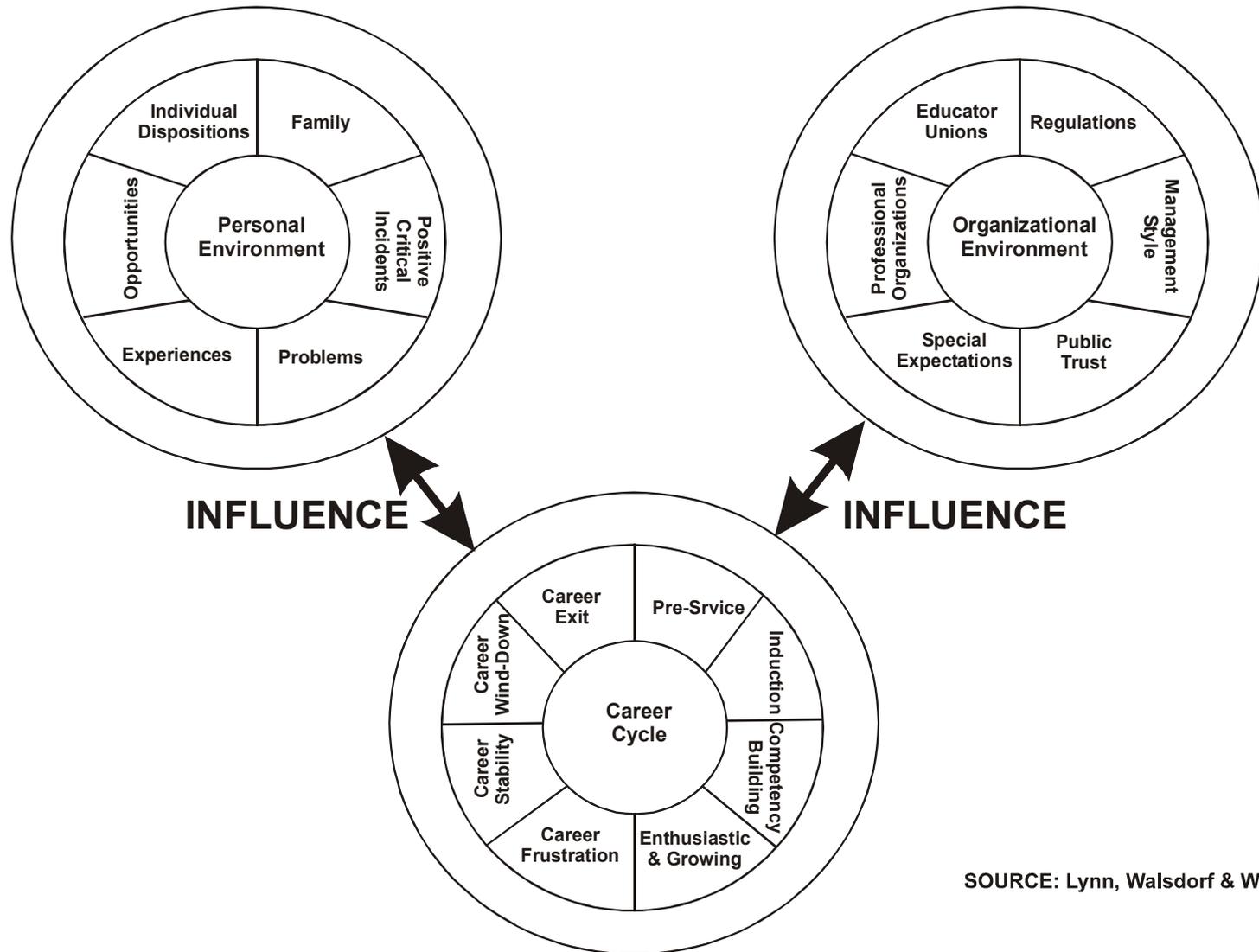
The concept of teacher learning, as used in my study, helps to explore what it would take to reconstruct professional education in ways that could improve teachers' capacity to encourage deeper and more complex learning in their students (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999: 5). The concept suggests that teacher development would have to acquire a fundamentally different content and character than it now has in which all its elements coherently support acquisition of knowledge, skills and dispositions that would encourage teacher learning. In the context of my study, it may have promoted an understanding of teachers' individual sense or identity through stories and narratives and thus bringing to focus an approach to individual identity, which is increasingly common in research on teachers (Matson & Harley, 2000).

However, the contextualised nature of teachers' work and development should not only be explained and understood in spatial terms, but should also be viewed in temporal terms. Teachers have a biography, thus, their life history or career constitutes the temporal context in which professional development occurs. Teacher learning at times can only be understood against the background of earlier experiences as well as expectations towards the future. This is supported by Huberman et al, 1993; Richardson & Placier, 2001, and studies on teachers' careers that illustrate how professional development focuses on different issues and in different career stages. Their research focuses on the narrative accounts by which teachers make sense of experiences during their careers. In the narrative-biographical studies, career is no longer seen as a chronological line of events, but rather as a meaningful narrative construct, which is also important for my study. Carter and Doyle (1996: 129), state that:

Through retrospective reflection, teachers construct their career experiences into a meaningful story and as such they continuously build and rebuild their identities as teacher, as well as their subjective theories about teaching.

This implies that it is not necessarily the formal biography that is of interest, but the career story as constructed by teachers. The following illustration (Figure 5)

Figure 5 - A model of the stages of the Teacher Career Cycle and the Environmental Factors that affect it.



SOURCE: Lynn, Walsdorf & Woods (2003)

shows that their personal environment and the organizational environment influence teachers' careers.

This is likely to have an impact on their professional development, the extent to which it changes classroom practices, and most importantly, the way they learn. This is significant for my study because it further supports the view that teacher learning is a personal process influenced by different factors.

The study uses a narrative account to explore teacher learning. A narrative orientation in teacher education is grounded in Dewey's philosophy of education and the belief that we learn from experience and reflection on practice (Beattie, 2000:2). This helps to put forward the idea that teachers bring knowledge to the teacher education setting. This knowledge has to be examined and adapted in the process of creating professional knowledge. Thus, conceptions of teaching and learning are reconstructed from a teacher's perspective. Teachers' perspectives in learning to teach allow their voices to be heard as they discuss their concerns, issues and ways in which they experience their learning and their lives. In support of these views, Kelchtermans (2000) also states that narratives constitute a strong starting point for meaningful reflection as they allow teachers to talk spontaneously about their experiences, in their natural voice.

The narrative perspective assists in acknowledging the complexities and realities of teacher learning. It shows to some extent the creative and personal ways in which individual teachers deal with dilemmas and challenges as well as using them in creating more opportunities for learning and professional development. In my study, narratives and stories are the framework within which experience is reflected upon, shared and reconstructed in the light of different perspectives, experiences and understandings. Therefore, using teacher stories is one way to understand how teachers perceive their DAS experiences and how they affect their teaching practices and learning. Teacher voices provide valuable insight for understanding teacher development and learning.

This approach also takes into consideration the structural, cultural and organisational context in which teachers operate. This is important because I was able to establish whether and to what extent teacher learning is framed by the resource contexts within which teachers work: that is, how teachers relate their learning to their working contexts. Although it is an important part of teaching, work context and its influence on teacher activities and behaviours has often been overlooked by educational reformers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Johnson, 1990).

The concept as applied in my study is located within practice as a site for professional learning. It also indicates ways to cultivate the sorts of inquiry into practice from which many teachers could learn. Again, if professional learning is located in the practice, it will become a key element in a curriculum of professional development (Briscoe, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Since teachers learn from a variety of experiences, they may, for example, develop a research programme in their own classrooms to generate knowledge about teaching and learning.

Understanding of the concept “teacher learning” offers ways to challenge and change common conceptions of practice at their roots in ways that link the development of better practice to practitioners’ development, and in ways that teachers might find useful. As changes in practice and professional learning develop, they promote the capabilities needed to radically transform the system at its base where the capacity for change is most critical.

3.5 Synthesis

Arguments on teacher learning show that there are differences in what learning means across settings. Therefore, the task of understanding the relationship between classroom practice, teacher development and teacher learning is complicated as it is influenced by various factors. Learning is situated, formal and informal and viewed from the political, social and cultural aspects, which makes it very complex to study. Adding to the complexity is the fact that teacher learning also occurs through a process of

disequilibrium and reconstruction. Again, the attempt to link professional development, organizational learning in schools, professional community, among others, and their impact on teacher learning remains difficult to observe. On the other hand, studies on these aspects have offered interesting possibilities to look at teacher development and learning.

Research shows that understanding professional development that can support teacher learning is a combination of ideas, beliefs and myths. Using theories of learning is problematic because the theories are too narrow to describe professional development in a versatile manner. But it is important to draw on theories of learning since teacher development is both growth and a learning process that is linked to environment and culture (Niikko, 2000). For example, in a teacher's professional, personal, social, and cultural development, there are influences of the various learning theories. Thus, for teacher learning to be meaningful, a reflexive approach to professional learning should be designed to develop new conceptual learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCHING TEACHER LEARNING

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and methodology used to investigate the research question on which this study is based, namely: What are the effects of developmental appraisal policy on “teacher learning” as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts?

This study employs qualitative methods and procedures to trace the implementation of government policy on teacher development in different resource contexts, and ways in which this policy influences teacher learning in these diverse contexts. The specific policy, which constitutes the focus of this implementation inquiry, is Developmental Appraisal System (DAS), which was introduced in 1999 in order to provide opportunities for the professional development of teachers, by improving the capacity of teachers to influence the quality of education.

4.2 Research Context

Qualitative research derives from the beliefs that human actions are strongly influenced by the settings in which they occur (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). The description of the research context is linked to the research question that guides my study. This description provides me with the means to examine the relation between theory and related practices. The context is described according to its dimensions, including how these dimensions facilitate or impede teacher learning. The study unfolded in the North West Province, which is one of the nine provinces in South Africa⁸. The province is

⁸ South Africa is divided into Nine Provinces, viz., North West, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Western Cape, Mpumalanga, Kwazulu-Natal, Free State and Limpopo Province

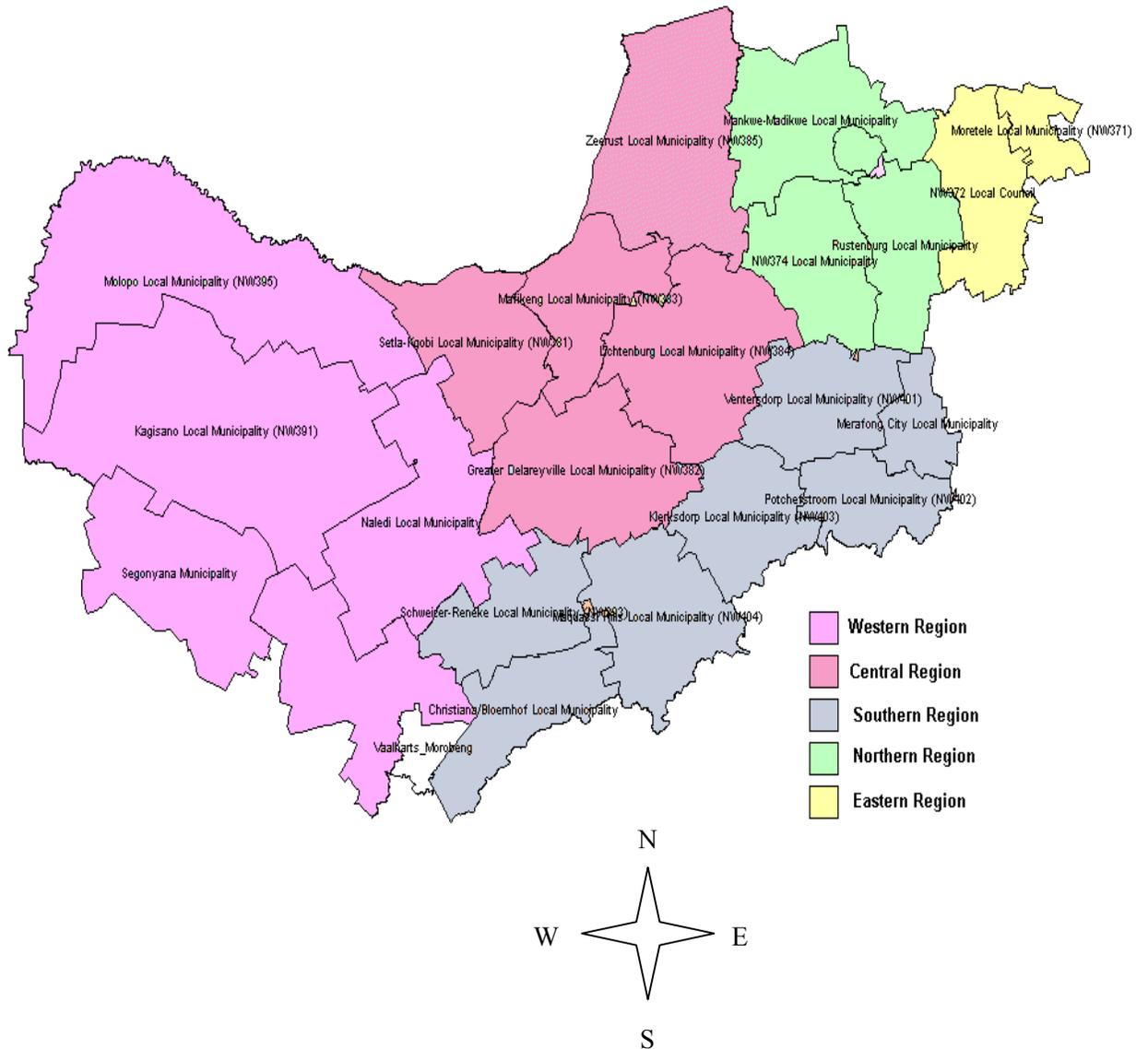
widely recognised as being historically disadvantaged by its position as a former homeland during the apartheid years. Economically, there has been little or no development especially in the rural and farm communities. On the whole, urban communities around Mafikeng district appear to have suffered from what analysts call stalled modernization. This may be due to the fact that the process of development has been held back by the convergence of a clash of values and the stigma of “Bophuthatswana” (See Map).

The provincial government and the department of education are divided into five magisterial regions, namely, Bophirima, Bojanala West, Bojanala East, Southern and Central in terms of the new demarcation. This means that the provincial Department of Education is divided into five education regions as illustrated in the Map⁹. The twelve teacher cases in the study are selected from schools located in two regions, viz. Central and Bophirima regions. It is worth noting that this structure was part of the transformation process, which began in 1997 and was only implemented in 2002 (NWDE, 2003:14).

The province is largely rural and has weak social and education indicators. It is characterised by poor school infrastructure especially in the farm and most of the rural areas. Historically, schools for blacks have suffered great disparities in the provision of human, physical as well as financial resources. This situation still persists and is still glaringly visible in rural and farm schools, and surprisingly in some of the schools in the urban areas. For example, in the Mafikeng district, a former model C school and a black public school still reflect the same disparity in terms of resources. In a former model C school selected as a well-resourced school for my study, buildings, their maintenance and physical location remain unchanged. The school has beautiful surroundings and landscape, with green grass, trees and flowers.

⁹The provincial education department constitutes the following regions: Central (Mafikeng, Lichtenburg, Atamelang, Zeerust), Bojanala East (Themba, Mabopane, Brits), Bojanala West (Rustenburg), Southern (Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp), Bophirima (Vryburg, Taung)

THE MAP OF THE EDUCATIONAL REGIONS IN NORTH WEST PROVINCE



Equipment, books and instructional materials, school ethos, staff qualifications, administrative expertise and parental support remain of high standard.

In contrast, rural and farm schools have not fared better; some buildings are dilapidated and basic to the point of a hard floor, a roof that sometimes leaks and broken windows due to vandalism. For example, in one school in Kuruman, toilet facilities have not been in a working condition for more than a year. In most schools there are not enough classrooms to cope with the enrolment. Furniture is minimal and resources are non-

existent in some cases and books usually arrive late if they do arrive. The averagely resourced rural school selected for my study is situated in a semi-desert area on the outskirts of Kuruman. The school appears to be in a state of paralysis with countless vandalism incidents and unpleasant environmental conditions, i.e. dusty and bare. On the other hand, the farm school is poorly resourced, and is one of the many disadvantaged schools. There is no staff room or office, the principal and staff use one small room that serves a dual purpose. In the classrooms, two learners share a single desk.

With a focus on teachers, in former model C schools teachers still enjoy good facilities, expectations of academic success and highly motivated students coupled with easy access to transport. This background helps towards building teachers' knowledge and the possibility of investing their personal time and resources in professional development. This is supported by Johnson et al (2000: 4), who point out that "to live and work in such circumstances allows them access to a system that offers professional practice as one of its alternatives". On the other hand, teachers in some rural and farm schools have poor academic training. Access to some of the remote rural schools is hampered by lack of proper roads. Locating some farm schools is a problem because they are almost swallowed up by the cornfields. Transport to and from school is a constant problem because teachers have to rely on public transport to and from workshops. This picture sets a rather different background to the possibilities for professional development.

According to reports from the Department of Education, the North West Province has approximately 17500 un(der)qualified teachers. This is supported by Foulds (2002) who revealed that the proportion of un(der)qualified teachers is as high as 39%. Furthermore, it has been established by a team from North West University, that was enrolling teachers for upgrading in the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) in the remote rural area of Ganyesa, that there are still teachers who hold a standard six certificate (grade 8) plus the Lower Primary Teachers' Certificate (LPTC). In the farm schools, most teachers do not possess a teaching qualification, and to make matters worse, farm schools are understaffed and a teacher is faced with a daunting task of handling all subjects and all grades, and some are even managed by farm owners. Despite the negative picture

painted, some of the schools fare better than urban schools because of commitment on the part of teachers. Although the new government is creating equality of opportunity, equality of outcomes is still compromised by unequal resource allocation.

On the whole, what appears to have affected teachers' morale is the government's policy of restructuring where teachers are declared in excess and thus reassigned to different schools. This has evoked anger, hostility and uncertainty amongst teachers who are never really sure of what to expect regarding their positions in schools. What is even baffling about the policy is that a teacher would be declared to be in excess even though he/she is the only mathematics/science teacher in that school. This usually results in another teacher taking over subjects for which he/she is not qualified to teach, adding to the problem of work overload and overcrowded classes. Implementation of the policy has caused disruptions, chaos and instability in schools, which has also affected teachers' attitudes towards policy implementation in general. Some teachers adopt a negative attitude and their reaction is often, "*Why bother, I will not be here tomorrow*".

The teaching profession in the North West Province like in other provinces of South Africa, is highly unionised, politicised and not very strong in motivating teachers to bring about changes necessary for providing quality education especially to rural and farm schools. There are tensions between teacher unions such as South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), National Association of Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) and the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyser Unie (SAOU). Unions, viz. SADTU contributed towards the disruptions in the implementation of DAS whilst the other two unions supported the implementation process.

SADTU in particular was not happy with some of the aspects, especially classroom observation and thus informed their members to boycott DAS. What unfolded was a scenario of uneven implementation. For example, in one high school in Mafikeng, teachers said they had seen the policy document, but never discussed and therefore never implemented it. Some schools discussed it, were eager to try it out, but they lacked support from principals. The former model C schools tried it right from phase one. What

also stands out clearly is that apart from affiliation to the different unions, DAS is differentially delivered because of the inherent differences between well-resourced and poorly resourced schools.

A series of disruptions and changes as well as continuous modifications of the policy (DAS) also contributed to changing participants for my study. The disruptions can be summarized as follows:

- a) Disruptions and uncertainty caused by declaring teachers in excess. For example, in one of the initial participating schools selected teachers for my study were moved to other schools.
- b) Unions' stance towards DAS i.e. objections to classroom observations and the instrument to be used.
- c) Infighting during appraisal because of refusal to accept the outcome of the appraisal.
- d) Constant modification of DAS, thus leading to confusion and uncertainty for teachers.
- e) No structures in place to guide the implementation process.

Lack of coordination led to schools doing what they saw fit to do, and the result was chaos in some schools. The impact of these disruptions on teachers' attempt to implement DAS differed from school to school and from teacher to teacher. The concern as indicated by Vithal (1998: 8) is: "How are the disruptions to be managed in the methodology?" It is also important to consider the implications for the research question, analysis and the knowledge produced. This issue is important for me because when I started with the study, I was operating with the underlying assumption of stability and normality in the research setting.

The context as described, highlights some of the forces shaping teachers' classroom practices, their professional development and the ways they learn. What has emerged from the scenario is the changing and unstable nature of the context in which the study is

conducted. Given this picture, my study aims at eliciting teacher narratives and life stories in a way that will shed light on the complex arena where the professional and personal aspects meet.

4.3 The General Approach: Building Teacher Cases

The study utilizes a multiple case study design. This is because the specific kind of inquiry pursued in this research is a combination of twelve case studies of teachers who are participants in the developmental appraisal process.

The interest in using case methods is due in part to a growing interest in the development of teacher's knowledge and cognition as well as acknowledgement of the complexities of teaching and learning. Case methods emerged due to a concern about the limitation of traditional teacher preparation and professional development (Shulman, 1992). Furthermore, the gap between the complex reality of classroom life and theoretical principles taught in pre-service and in-service courses has also been highlighted with a view that case methods would offer a different and in-depth approach to the realities of the teachers' lives in the classrooms. For my study, tracing a complex process such as teacher learning could only be best addressed through the use of cases. Thus, they are used with the aim of helping teachers acquire pedagogical and theoretical knowledge grounded in situations like those they encounter in professional practice. WestEd. (1997:1) supports the view by stating that "cases reflect reality, they help teachers learn to connect theories and concepts to the complex, idiosyncratic world of practice". Thus, they do enhance analytic thought, reflection, inquiry and knowledge.

For instance, my study traces the effects of the developmental appraisal system on teacher learning in different resource contexts. Using cases gave teachers an opportunity to write and talk about their teaching and learning experiences, opinions and perceptions and the extent to which they have been influenced by DAS.

Merseth (2001) explains a case as a descriptive approach that is usually presented in the narrative form and is based on a real life situation. It aims at portraying a balanced, multidimensional representation of the context, participants and reality of the situation. Cases are created for discussion and include enough detail and information to elicit active analysis and interpretation with differing perspectives. The explanation reaffirms essential elements about teacher cases, they are real, they require careful research and study and they also foster the development of different perspectives.

The case method presents teachers with the opportunity to integrate their beliefs with known theories as they respond to complex and problematic real-life situations. It encourages teachers to examine possible responses to a particular situation and thus enabling them to understand the complexities of teaching and learning. Teacher's descriptions of classroom events reveal much about their instructional strategies and beliefs (Siegel, 2002). Furthermore, the use of case methods for teacher education supports the view that teaching is situated cognition, decision-making, reflection and related aspects of teacher knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

The above issues are highlighted in the conceptual framework of my study on "teacher learning" where indications are that teacher learning is also influenced by various aspects viz. personal images shaped by and situated in beliefs, professional identities, theories of learning, and participation in communities among others.

Teacher cases portray stories of situations and experiences that help to address questions about teaching and learning and promoting effective teaching practices. As Shulman (1992) points out, engaging in dialogue about a case is key to learning from it. The dialogue creates the kind of on-going community of practice teachers use in their workplace. Cases are not simply stories that a teacher might tell. They are crafted into compelling narratives, and situated in an event or series of events that unfold over time. Therefore, cases are helpful in highlighting classroom management, inquiry and reflection on teaching and knowledge. Stories that are told present a wide variety of situations, decisions and difficulties that routinely confront teachers.

This implies that teacher cases are detailed descriptions of events or situations usually presented in the narrative form. Shulman (1996) also points out that the growing interest in using teacher cases is due to an increasing appreciation of the value of narrative forms of thinking as opposed to abstraction and generalization. Narrative forms of thinking are compatible with the ways teachers organize their experiences and develop professional knowledge. The teacher cases for my inquiry are presented in the narrative approach, which presents teachers with the opportunity to communicate their experiences by telling stories. These testimonial accounts allowed for explication of teachers' professional knowledge and beliefs.

Cases help in probing issues of learning, which is challenging to those interested in a constructivist interpretation of learning. The main rationale for using cases is that they help teachers understand and respond to the complexity and subtlety of the teaching profession in its real life context. "They are used in situations which call for reasoned judgements and decisions rather than applying rule and principles in fixed ways" (Martin, 1996:1). For example, using cases, I explored what teachers learned from their experience of DAS. I examined, in-depth, what retelling and reflecting prompt for their classroom experiences. This also includes reflective comments in their accounts that examine what they have learned from their experiences.

Informed by the above general approach as a guide, the following are the aspects I also took into consideration in the development of the cases for this inquiry. The teacher cases detail the complexities of implementing reform-based practices in diverse reform contexts. The teacher cases for my study focus on teachers who are actively involved in the developmental appraisal system. They were selected from three various contexts, namely, well resourced, averagely resourced and poorly resourced, which was the most disadvantaged school.

I involved teachers who had received some training on the implementation process and thus received exposure to the process of DAS, starting with self-appraisal to peer appraisal at school level as well as external appraisal by a panel. Out of the 12 teachers, 3

(one from each school) are in charge of DAS activities in their schools. This means that they had to ensure that the rest of the staff members are informed about any developments on DAS, co-ordinate the appraisal process in consultation with the principal and the School Development Team (SDT), and maintain a rooster indicating who has been appraised and who is yet to be appraised. These 3 teachers have attended meetings and workshops on DAS, and lately also received training on the IQMS.

For the remaining 9 teachers, training involved a briefing session at school level about the DAS policy document, attending 1-2 workshops arranged by NWDE around implementation issues. The training workshops attended varied from school to school. For example, in the well- resourced school, apart from the DAS coordinator, teachers attended a one-hour briefing session at school level and one workshop by the Department of Education. The DAS coordinator attended most of the meetings and workshops and teachers would consult him where they needed something to be clarified. In the averagely resourced school the DAS coordinator and two other teachers attended all workshops and would share information with other staff members in a one afternoon session arranged by the principal, and teachers would consult them whenever they needed clarity on different issues. In the poorly resourced school, only one teacher attended DAS workshops, and the principal attended some of the workshops.

The participating teachers were guided in writing a reflection on their learning from DAS as part of their professional development and this turned out to be a frustrating activity. Specifically, I asked them to reflect on successes and challenges of implementing DAS.

4.4 The Sampling Frame

The research inquiry employs purposive sampling because teachers and schools were selected for their special positioning in relation to the implementation of DAS. The assumption was that by the time data collection started i.e. August 2002, they would have had about three years of experience with DAS. Teachers would also have gone through the required briefings and training workshops. Thus, the teachers who participated in the

study were expected to be articulate and expressive about DAS in terms of their own experiences, and be willing to talk about their own learning.

Because I am focusing on teachers' learning in various resource contexts, I identified three primary schools of varying resource contexts. These were selected employing the departmental records of the socio-economic status of schools in the North West Province. This categorization of schools was done in line with the Norms and Standards for School Funding (1998), whereby the government funds schools according to the socio-economic status of the feeder areas. The data about resource contexts was obtained from the NWDE which enabled me to identify one well-resourced, averagely resourced and poorly resourced i.e. the most disadvantaged.

Since my unit of analysis is teachers, I selected teachers using the following criteria: firstly, they had different qualification profiles, that is, the group-comprised teachers with a range of qualifications from under-qualified through to fully qualified. Each of these teachers was graded in terms of a progressive scale of academic and professional qualifications. Secondly, they had different levels of teaching experience, ranging from a minimum of 5 years experience to 20 years teaching experience. Finally, they also worked in different resource contexts. This kind of sampling allowed me to relate teacher learning qualitatively to teacher profiles (qualifications and experiences) and teaching resource contexts.

In August 2002, I started with case studies of six teachers from three schools in the different resource contexts as my original intention. The teachers were selected with the assistance of the principals, and through my discussions with them, they showed a willingness to participate in the study.

I had to change these teachers as participants in my study for the following reasons: Firstly, the poorly resourced school, which was a farm school, had a complement of five teachers including the principal. The teachers in this school were still in the process of finding their way around DAS. They still required a lot of guidance and support in the

implementation of DAS. Their desire to participate in the study came from their commitment as teachers.

Secondly, the averagely resourced school was situated in a rural background. One of its striking characteristics was that when the bell rang for the school to start, all gates were locked. When I took a walk around the school, learners would not be in their classes, they would be standing behind the classrooms and toilets and few would be attending lessons. In-fighting characterized the implementation of DAS. One of the participants in my study asked for a transfer to another school citing reasons of victimization by his peers and principal. He openly declared that he would not accept any advice from anyone. This is what he said:

... I am defensive and emotional about the whole appraisal business. The principal lives on rumour, and criticism from other members of staff. Just the idea of being told that I deserve a low rating drives me mad ...

The second teacher, in solidarity with the plight of her colleague, was no longer willing to participate in the study, so, that closed the chapter on the involvement of teachers from that background.

Finally, the last two teachers from a well-resourced former White school indicated that time was problematic for them. They were preparing for examinations and had to deal with a lot of administrative work. The other issue for deciding not to participate was because of the general boycott of DAS. This last issue affected all other efforts I tried for teachers to participate in the study. The unions had already declared a dispute with the Department of Education, citing their basic concern about WSE.

The new set of participating schools and teachers in my study was selected with the assistance of the QACD in the NWP. The directorate was responsible for WSE and they had also been tasked with implementation and resuscitation of DAS. The principals played a role in identifying teachers for my study. Eventually, 12 teachers from 3 schools

in different resource contexts became the new participants in the study and they were from schools that were selected for piloting the resuscitation of DAS. Despite the assistance from the QACD, teachers were still reluctant to participate in the study.

With the principals' permission, I arranged meetings with participating teachers to brief them about my expectations and their role in the study. Informing them about the data gathering techniques for my study elicited various reactions from the teachers because they were unfamiliar with such techniques. They made it clear that they preferred questionnaires.

4.5 Data Points in Assembling the Cases

Proper description and analysis of teachers' learning depend on data collection strategies based on various research instruments. It is also important to gather teachers' views stemming from their experiences by listening to their own voices. I have to acknowledge that although I used different data collection strategies for my study, determining that learning has occurred in individual teachers is a frustrating and difficult claim to make.

In this inquiry, it was important that normal teaching duties and responsibilities of teachers were not disturbed. I arranged with the teachers for our meetings to take place during their free periods and after school hours. Two of the teachers from the well-resourced school permitted me to visit them at their homes. For the sake of confidentiality, teachers did not make their names known on any of the research instruments, but assumed pseudonyms.

In my study, data collection implies that teachers are asked to look back in time and narratively reconstruct their experiences on DAS. The aim is to elicit teacher narratives and stories in a way that shed light on the complex process of teacher learning. The research methodology is guided by one main research question: What are the effects of developmental appraisal policy on "teacher learning" as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts?

With the above question as the focus of my study, I used **teacher testimonies** to assess the implementation of DAS i.e. to get a sense of whether teachers who had been through the appraisal process felt that they had benefited from it and whether in particular they thought it had had any impact on their classroom practices. These testimonies were composed qualitatively through the use of five data collection strategies or “probes” that informed and constructed these testimonial accounts i.e. biographical data, free writing schedule, semi-structured interviews, teacher diaries and critical incident reports. These formed the core data and provided scope for analysing teacher narratives within different resource contexts. Testimonies are narratives that are told in the first person by a narrator who is also the witness of events recounted, and whose unit of narration is usually a significant life experience (Tierney, 2000). This involves intense and extended conversations with teachers and is based on the premise that teachers’ experiences, the choices they make and the process of learning, are deeply personal matters, which are linked to their identity and their life story (Carter, 1995). Thus, narrative is the way that teachers can make sense of their lives and experiences.

Kagan (1991: 250) also refers to narrative as a story that relates an event or series of events. The story represents a way of knowing and thinking that is particularly suited to explicating teachers’ practical understanding. He further states that time and sequence are important dimensions since narrative is a temporal ordering of experience. Stories are a powerful way of communicating because they provoke emotions and empathy, which makes the listener to speculate and resonate with the affected people and their experiences. Convery (1999) sees narrative as sponsoring the teacher’s voice thus encouraging the teacher to talk about their lives. Therefore, in the process of retrieving and disclosing these rich sources of data teachers develop new understanding of their behaviour, which improves confidence and implicitly their practice. This means that the contextual understanding offered by the narrative leads to new insights, judgments and the creation of knowledge and meanings that inform practice. This also supports the assumption that teachers’ professional behaviour is not only determined by context, but by a life history and related experiences.

Therefore the participating teachers in the study shared their understanding of DAS and its impact on their learning, through narratives. Throughout the study, the inquiry process evolved as a kind of conversation where teachers told their story. Connelly and Clandinin (1990: 2) sum it up by indicating that such inquiry is grounded in the premise that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories.

The main aspects that serve as the focus are based on: reflection of experiences before the appraisal process, self-appraisal, after the self-appraisal, peer appraisal, after peer appraisal, appraisal by panel members and after the appraisal by panel members.

The first probe for testimonies is the teachers' biography. Teachers were required to reflect on their careers and narratively share their experiences and the meaning they got from them. I gave them a short questionnaire in which they were asked to give a chronological overview of the formal career positions they occupied, their qualifications, their teacher training experience, and their teaching experience. These were presented to teachers in their respective schools during the first week of May 2003. Thus, the career of teachers was explored chronologically. The questionnaire gave rise to narrative biographical interviews, which assisted in a systematic exploration of the data received from the teachers' careers. The interviews took about 45 minutes per teacher.

The second probe for teacher testimonies was free writing schedule. This was a qualitative non-directive open approach that provides in-depth information, because teachers were given the opportunity to express their feelings and opinions. They were given the free writing schedule to complete during their free time. This was collected after one week. Teachers were able to reflect and explore their own ideas in a non-restrictive manner. Thus, this enabled me to gain information on their unstructured responses on the meanings they assigned to the policy concept, DAS.

The third probe for teacher testimonies was semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview allowed for rich data to be collected in which specific individual experiences of every teacher were presented. The in-depth semi-structured interviews

assisted me to gain insight into teachers' perspectives on their learning and their work experiences through the implementation of DAS. They also helped to ensure rich descriptions by teachers on how the policy influenced classroom practice as well as their professional development. I developed guidelines for a cycle of four interviews as my original intention. These interviews were to be conducted in four successive "waves" that were timed to coincide with specific DAS training events. The logic of four interviews per teacher was that they would have had progressively more exposure during the course of the year. I tried to be a listener than an active interviewer. I was guided by the basic assumption that in the narrative biographical approach teachers build their own world and construe their own lives. This means that my role was to be a listener, to reflect and reformulate what teachers said in the dialogue through which the narrative unfolded.

Teachers were interviewed individually except in the case of the well-resourced school where all teachers requested to be interviewed at the same time during the first session. The reason put forward was fear of being recorded, so, the first session gave them a chance to deal with the fear. The interviews ranged from one hour to two hours. I ended up with two major sessions per teacher i.e. a total of 5 hours of interview time per teacher. This resulted from the problems linked to the implementation of DAS. I also followed up with telephonic interviews to seek clarity on statements made by teachers. In some cases, I deviated from the interview schedule to ask follow up questions. The interviews were audiotaped, except in the case of two teachers who refused the use of a tape recorder, so, I just took notes.

The fourth probe for generating teacher testimonies is a self-kept teacher-diary. As part of my original intention, each teacher was to keep a weekly diary where they noted the successes, failures and concerns experienced as they were exposed to the implementation of DAS over a period of time. With the developments in the implementation or non-implementation of DAS, teachers only managed to keep a single diary outlining different experiences. 6 teachers out of 12 were specifically identified and followed for keeping diaries after the effort with the rest of the teachers did not yield any useful information. I

provided them with criteria for the entries so that the content related to the research question. The diaries complemented the interview questions.

The final probe for building teacher testimonies were teacher descriptions of critical incidents. Critical incidents are key events in an individual's life around which pivotal decisions revolve. It was an effective qualitative approach that was used to obtain an in-depth analytical description about real-life accounts (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994: 48; Redmann et al, 2000). Teachers provided descriptions of critical incidents that constituted important learning moments or events in their DAS experiences. I requested them to convey the impact the key events might have had in the stories of their experiences with DAS. Both the teacher diaries and critical incident reports presented a serious challenge to teachers who were not willing to go through the process that required them to put ideas on paper.

The events in the critical incident reports were categorized as follows:

- Peak experience: A peak experience was something that really stood out or that was really impressive in their DAS experiences. These would be episodes in their stories in which they experienced positive emotions, that is, they had to indicate the impact on their professional development;
- Low point: Teachers had to talk about specific experiences in which they felt extremely negative emotions about DAS. The experiences had to represent low points in their stories about DAS; and
- Turning point: teachers had to talk about particular episodes in their stories, which they saw as turning points. This would be an experience through which a teacher underwent substantial change.

Teachers mentioned these moments as important for their professional development. The strategies gave me an opportunity to work closely with teachers in different resource contexts to achieve, through, keeping diaries, critical incident reports, conversations, construction of narratives, an understanding of the effects of developmental appraisal system as a policy on teacher learning.

4.6 Processing, Coding and Analysis of Data for the Cases

The first step in the processing of data involved developing transcripts from the semi-structured interviews. This involved the task of transcribing the recorded interviews into written format. This gave me the opportunity to compare the recorded interviews with the transcribed work and to guard against distortion of information between the transcript and the recorded interview. Throughout the process of transcribing and listening to the recorded interviews, I had to take caution not to misrepresent the voices of the teachers and the meanings attached to the words.

The second step involved free writing schedule which solicited understanding of the DAS policy, teacher diaries and critical incident reports where teachers identified high, low and turning points as experienced through DAS. These were transcribed and content was analyzed.

In the process of categorizing data from teacher diaries and critical incident reports, it became necessary for me to go back to the teachers not only to make follow-ups, but also to revisit the process of putting together diaries and critical incident reports. Teachers just presented information without following the guidelines, and I expected each teacher to write about 2-3 pages on the diaries, but what I received were ½ a page reports. Despite all these efforts, I finally ended up with 6 teachers writing diaries because the others were not willing to cooperate.

In conducting the analysis I used elements of the grounded theory approach and produced my own framework grounded in the data itself. Data were coded according to categories

generated in the course of reading transcripts. Categories ranged from the descriptive to the interpretative. The system of coding and categorizing went through a series of iterations as I attempted to refine and challenge classifications that may lead me to draw reductionist conclusions from the teacher narratives. The categories developed proved to be a useful tool in describing and understanding the different aspects in the complex process of teacher learning through DAS.

In the process of coding and categorizing data I used the technique of writing analytic memos to reflect on my own and teachers' assumptions and voices in the data. This gave me the opportunity to crystallize my ideas and theories about teacher learning through these testimonial accounts. In the analysis, it was important for me to hold onto the core of each teacher's story. This was quite a challenge to me because this was my first encounter with the narrative approach and I was rather overwhelmed.

With the individual teacher serving as the unit of analysis, I used constant comparative analysis to look for recurrent themes that became categories for focus across the different cases. This allowed me to discover whether a pattern found in one resource context occurred in others as well, which would suggest issues of commonality. It was not my intention to compare teacher stories from different contexts, but I saw differences in the way of how and what they narrated their experiences. Inductive analysis was done to allow for the emergence of categories, themes and sub-themes. This means that data analysis was done initially through word processing. I was thus able to go over the data in order to get an overview of the information while the key words were underlined and meaning was attached to the words.

4.7 Enhancing Validity

Validity in educational research, particularly in case study research has been debated for some time. Whilst researchers with a positivist orientation have always questioned the validity of case study research, some are beginning to accept that it is possible to increase validity even in case study research. Wolf (1999) states that validity is concerned with

whether an instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure. A point is further made that educational studies that use measures lacking in validity are likely to produce worthless results regardless of how well sampling, data collection and analysis are carried out.

Taking note of this exposition, in my study, trustworthiness was established through the use of multiple techniques that helped to enhance credibility and dependability. These were used to assess the inquiry for consistency and neutrality. Thus, applying the following strategies increased validity:

Triangulation: This refers to the use of multiple sources of data or data collection methods. Yin (1994: 79), says that the most important thing about triangulation is that the data collected from different sources should converge on the “same set of findings”. I compared data from the various “probes,” that is, biographical data, free writing schedule, semi-structured interviews, teacher diaries and critical incident descriptions for consistency.

Secondly, my prolonged engagement with teachers in the research setting strengthened the validity of the research findings. This helped me to build a good rapport with them and thus enabled me to obtain a more holistic picture of the contextual conditions that influenced their DAS experiences. For me, validity was trustworthiness; what teachers believe to be true-life experiences.

Furthermore, providing thick, rich descriptions or detailed accounts of the contexts in which teachers worked helped to ensure validity. It reflected resources, personal feelings, emotions and experiences at various points. Finally, member checking as a validity procedure was also employed to make the process open to critical inspection by others. Colleagues from my institution read my work and provided critical comments. A draft report was sent to the teachers for verification. Few of the teachers provided comments for further improvements.

4.8 Limitations of the Study

I have various concerns with regard to the efficacy and quality of this study, which aims at tracing the effects of developmental appraisal system on teacher learning in different resource contexts.

Firstly, the fact that I am conducting my research by means of case study methodology, allows me to glean teachers' personal voices of their experiences. However, it has been argued that a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class (Flyvberg, 2001). Implicit in this statement is the doubt on the generalizability of the findings of the case study in general. The very nature of the case study is such that the findings are not high in external validity and generalizability. Although I agree with the lack of the generalizability of the findings of the case study report, I think there are other ways of addressing the lack of generalizability depending on the nature of the study. The aim is to either confirm or not confirm the truth as carried out by the propositions.

Secondly, there is no doubt that making meaning or getting to understand change is a process that takes time. The fact that I am researching teacher learning through the developmental appraisal system, which has gone through several "changes" in a short space of time and characterised by chaos in implementation is problematic. This is because uncertainty and anxiety are still high and may have given a skewed impression.

The third limitation, which seems to characterise most qualitative studies, came about because of teachers' efforts to put on a show during my interaction with them. Most of the teachers could not behave naturally due to nervousness and this may have affected accommodation of data. In addressing the limitation, I created friendly rapport during the prolonged engagement with teachers. This enabled them to relax and to behave as naturally as possible in telling their stories about the DAS experiences. I also had to find some incentives for them to participate as naturally as possible.

Finally, bias toward verification is cited as another limitation to the case study. The assumption is that bias toward verification is maintained in a case study in order to confirm the researchers' preconceived notions, and this may cast doubts on the study. It has to be noted that bias affects all types of research methods. The limitation was addressed by subjecting teachers to continuous study, which helped to dispel preconceived ideas of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHER LEARNING AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF TEACHERS WORKING IN DIFFERENT RESOURCE CONTEXTS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the empirical data that were collected in response to the main research question that guided this inquiry, i.e. what are the effects of Developmental Appraisal Policy on teacher learning as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts?

The data for this inquiry were generated through a combination of data collection methods including free writing schedules, biographical data which presented profiles of the twelve teachers cases, semi-structured interviews, critical incident reports and teacher diaries.

This chapter is divided into three sections for purposes of organizing and presenting the research findings. In Section One, I describe and assess data on how the teachers understood the developmental appraisal policy. This section is important because it lays the empirical foundation for exploring teacher learning later in the thesis.

Section Two presents the data collected at the various stages of the teacher appraisal process, i.e. preparation for appraisal, reflective process (self-appraisal), peer appraisal and appraisal by panel members. This systematic presentation of the data was done in order to capture how teacher learning occurred through these various stages of the appraisal process.

In Section Three, a summary of key findings is discussed by presenting the evidence in the form of themes that emerged during the course of this study. This section tries to synchronize findings on how teachers learn, taking into account data presented in the previous two sections.

Section One

5.2 How Teachers Understand Appraisal Policy

The implementation of DAS, like other policies, placed demands on the teachers in terms of knowledge and understanding. Teachers were required to act as interpreters of the policy. This is important since teachers' understanding of the policy affects the implementation process and ultimately, this educational practice. I conducted a constant comparative analysis of the data collected through the free writing schedules, face-to-face interviews, and against the readings of the literature on teacher learning. The questions that elicited the data reported in this chapter included the following: How do teachers understand DAS as policy and what was the policy responding to? What are the main goals of the policy? How effectively was the advocacy for the implementation of the policy done? These questions provided the empirical base for exploring the relationship between policy and practice in the context of teacher appraisal.

The understanding of DAS varied among teachers within the different resource contexts. There was a difference among DAS coordinators/heads of departments and of the teachers. For example, some teachers showed a limited understanding of the policy while others had a broader and more refined conception of DAS.

When articulating their understanding of the objectives of DAS, teachers made references to quality, improving teaching, development, maintaining standards, effectiveness and professional satisfaction. These kinds of progressive ideals suggest that perhaps teachers had begun to align themselves with the official purposes of DAS. Although teachers recognize these formal codes of policy, it does not imply that these are necessarily reflected in their practices. Their narratives revealed that they also had to work through certain contradictions within the developmental appraisal system.

TABLE 2: Teacher Cases: General Background And Characteristics

NAME	GENDER	AGE GROUP	DESIGNATION	TEACHING EXPERIENCE (YEARS)	DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL	FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS
Peter **	M	30-34	Deputy Principal	11	Urban (Well Resourced)	HDE IV: 4 Year Diploma
Elsie	F	35-39	Teacher & HOD ¹	10	Urban (Well Resourced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UDE: 3 Year Diploma ○ BA: 3 Year Degree ○ BA Honours: 1 Year Postgraduate
Tonderai	M	30-34	Teacher	6	Urban (Well Resourced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BED: 4 Year Degree ○ BA Honours: 1 Year Postgraduate
Molapo	M	25-29	Teacher	5	Urban (Well Resourced)	BAED: 4 Year Degree
Lydia	F	30-34	Teacher	5	Urban (Well Resourced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BA: 3 Year Degree ○ HDE: 1 Year Postgraduate Diploma
Ruby **	F	35-39	Teacher & HOD ²	11	Rural (Moderately Resourced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UDE: 3 Year Diploma ○ BA: 3 Year Degree
Desiree	F	40-49	Teacher & HOD ³	20	Rural (Moderately Resourced)	PTC: 2 Year Diploma
Omega	F	30-34	Teacher & HOD ⁴	8	Rural (Moderately Resourced)	UDE: 3 Year Diploma
Maggy	F	30-34	Teacher	8	Rural (Moderately Resourced)	UDE: 3 Year Diploma
Zolile	M	40-49	Principal	14	Rural-Farm (Poorly Resourced)	JSTC: 2 Year Diploma
Selbie **	F	40-49	Teacher & HOD ⁵	16	Rural-Farm (Poorly Resourced)	PTC: 2 Year Diploma
Madipuo	F	40-49	Teacher	18	Rural-Farm (Poorly Resourced)	Unqualified

**** Refers to DAS Coordinators**

The twelve teacher cases (9 Africans, 2 Coloureds, 1 White) and their profiles are presented in Table 3. The teachers and the three schools have been given pseudonyms in order to conceal their true identities, as they had requested. The schools are John Edwards Primary, a well-resourced urban school, Bareng Primary, a moderately resourced rural school, and Retlafihla Primary, a poorly resourced farm school.

The following are narrative accounts of policy understanding presented through the cases of teachers working in different resource contexts. This is a portrayal of teachers' experiences of the developmental appraisal system. The narratives have not been edited and are presented verbatim.

5.2.1 John Edwards Primary School

John Edwards Primary School is a former white advantaged school and is well resourced. The five teacher cases interviewed are the deputy principal who is DAS coordinator, a departmental head and three teachers. These teachers were interviewed as a group as they had requested. The principal also attended the interview sessions because of a special interest he had expressed in the policy. During these sessions, Peter, the deputy principal and DAS coordinator, strove to portray DAS in a positive light, despite the fact that other teachers felt different about the benefits of DAS. The following are the narratives on their understanding of DAS policy:

Case # 1: Peter

Peter is a deputy principal, a teacher and DAS coordinator at John Edwards Primary School. He teaches Natural Sciences Learning Area¹⁰ (NS) to grade 7 learners (4 classes of ±40 learners), and Mathematics to only 2 classes at the same grade level. As part of the school management structure he also works with the principal in conducting class visits as a common practice adopted by the school. He has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing the setting up of the School Development Team (SDT) and drawing up of the School Development Plan (SDP)

¹⁰ Learning Area is a School Subject in the South African Curriculum Structure

for the implementation of DAS policy. In addition, as DAS coordinator, he has been responsible for providing information and assisting teachers about issues/questions concerning the policy. He is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Honours (Educational Management) programme to further his studies.

Peter's understanding of the policy offered insight into issues that inform professional development. He understands the developmental appraisal policy in the following terms:

DAS is a system designed by the Department of Education in collaboration with the unions to evaluate educators to see if they are performing according to standards set by the department. It is meant to identify needs or shortcomings so that the relevant assistance can be sought to develop the educator in that area. The old system where inspectors used to evaluate educators subjectively has been done away with. This meant that a new system had to be developed which was more in line with the principles of democracy. It identifies aspects that needed development. To provide time frames in which these concerns should be addressed and rectified. I just hope that it will not raise teachers' hopes and end up letting them down (JE¹¹.D.Pri.1).

Peter's understanding of DAS corresponds with policy intentions. He also makes an attempt to explain the importance of DAS as opposed to the old inspection system that was previously in place.

In the same interview, in response to a further question about the main goals of DAS, he responded as follows:

To identify areas or aspects that needs development. To provide time frames in which these concerns should be addressed and rectified, to improve the level of performance of educators and to continue developing their skills (JE:D.Pri.2).

¹¹ JE: Refers to John Edwards Primary School where the five teacher cases were selected as participants

Peter's explanation reflects a clear understanding of DAS. A closer look at his response also reflects a clear role of the policy with regards to teacher development. This gives further evidence that he has a fairly good understanding of the policy. Perhaps his fair understanding of the policy can be ascribed to the exposure and opportunities he has as a deputy principal and DAS coordinator in the school. This finds support in the acknowledgement that he had access to the policy document and other materials, which he has carefully studied to become fully acquainted with DAS.

With reference to how the implementation process was actually followed i.e. advocacy, Peter's response revealed that he initially had misgivings about DAS and was also sceptical about its intentions because of the implementation problem. He commented as follows:

We have just been introduced to the new DAS system by a departmental official, up to that point we were not thinking about such a system as there were so many changes that had come into the education system. We were still concentrating on the changes that came about because of OBE and Curriculum 2005. The first thought that came to mind was what is this nonsense again? In order to be better prepared, I read a lot especially the section that pertained to my post level as a deputy principal, because educators were given copies of DAS. The main problem I had was that the implementation of DAS was not well planned, and it only created more work and problems for educators (JE:D.Pri.3).

Peter's response highlighted a challenge that teachers had to deal with, that is, the implementation of DAS policy at the time when teachers were still grappling with a major educational change such as OBE. Thus, his comments revealed a sense of despair on how the implementation process unfolded. This supports the concern that the implementation of DAS was not only approached in a fragmented manner, but also ignored problems teachers were confronted with. The suggestion is that during the advocacy process, no efforts were made to link the process to OBE activities. Indeed, lack of training on OBE and inadequate knowledge were cited as areas of concern throughout the discussions on DAS policy.

On the other hand, his understanding of the policy was enhanced by reading a lot about the policy thus his comments showed how he was able to advance his knowledge, which he applied in his understanding of DAS policy.

Although the other four teacher cases from John Edwards (Elsie, Tonderai, Molapo and Lydia) articulated a fair understanding of the policy, there were slight differences amongst these teachers in their interpretations of the policy. Their understanding of DAS also held positive benefits for teachers, but what emerged from their interpretations are contradictions and to some extent lack of adequate knowledge to inform their understanding of DAS policy.

Case # 2: Elsie

Elsie is a teacher and a departmental head. She teaches Human and Social Sciences (HSS) learning area to grade 6 and 7 learners. Apart from her administrative duties, she is also the chairperson of the school's organizing committee (various school functions). She works very closely with learners who have learning problems because of her background and training as a school counsellor. As a departmental head, she assists Peter in ensuring that teachers receive information and clarity where possible on DAS policy.

Elsie showed a fair understanding of the policy, which held positive benefits for teachers. In sharing her understanding of DAS policy, she responded as follows:

My understanding is that DAS helps to identify and develop potential educators. To provide support to educators, and to encourage them to strive for professional satisfaction. DAS also helps teachers in improving on areas that are lacking in the different learning areas (J.E.HOD¹.1).

The response given by Elsie is in line with DAS intentions with an emphasis on identifying and developing educators for improvement in the different learning areas. Her understanding of DAS also touched on the importance of support and encouragement towards professional development.

Case # 3: Tonderai

Tonderai is a teacher for grade 4 learners in Human and Social Sciences (4 classes of ± 40 learners); and 1 class of Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC). He is in charge of soccer for the school's senior team, and also serves as a member of the school organizing committee. The principal has described him as a committed and reliable teacher. As one of the fairly new teachers in the school, he seemed very optimistic about DAS policy on teacher development if properly implemented.

On the understanding of DAS policy, Tonderai commented as follows:

Appraisal system is another way of developing teachers in their method of teaching. It helps teachers to know their right and wrong ways of teaching the children. I think it is necessary for us educators because after being appraised it is then that an educator will know the right method of using his/her skills in the classroom (J.E.T.1).

Although Tonderai's understanding of DAS appears to be fair, what is problematic is where he refers to the policy as a way of assisting teachers to "know the right method". This gives the impression that teachers have been using wrong methods of teaching, and with the implementation of DAS, his assumption is that they will now be able to use "the right methods". This part of his explanation of DAS gives an indication that he has a rather limited understanding of the policy. In addition, this limitation may be ascribed to inadequate exposure and knowledge about the policy. If one takes a critical look at Tonderai's comments it attests to inadequate advocacy on awareness and providing knowledge and understanding.

Case # 4: Molapo

Molapo is a Mathematics teacher to the other two grade 7 classes as well as Natural Sciences at Grade 6 level (4 classes of ± 40 learners). He is one of the relatively new teachers in the school; and as he puts it, he is "*still trying to find his footing in teaching*". He has been chosen by the principal as a young and new teacher to work closely with Peter on DAS policy. He is one of the few teachers in the school who

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views DAS policy from a positive perspective. He also works with Tonderai in the training and supervision of the senior soccer team.

Molapo's understanding of DAS is fair and it corresponds with policy intentions. He gave his understanding of DAS policy as follows:

DAS is the system through which the government tries to identify the skills of educators and give support and training where the educator is lacking the skill. This was in a way skills audit among the educators. This was necessary to make sure there is no misplacement of educators (JE.Mol.1).

He draws attention on the importance of acquiring skills, which are essential for educator development. He also adopts a rather positive perspective where he further explains the process as a skills audit. Implicit in the statement is the possibility that teachers are likely to end up teaching what they have been trained for.

Case # 5: Lydia

Lydia is a teacher, in Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) to grade 7 learners (4 classes). She also offers Life Orientation to 2 classes in grade 6. She is responsible for all the prefects in the school. Apart from setting up the code of conduct for prefects, she also arranges training camps where they receive guidance about their roles within the school. Lydia also assists Elsie in counselling learners with problems. She is one of the teachers who are very negative and sceptical about DAS policy in realizing its intentions.

Lydia understands the developmental appraisal policy in the following terms:

My understanding of DAS is that after an educator has been appraised, there is time given for the educator to be developed in the area of shortcomings or weaknesses. In my view, DAS is necessary for the reason that OBE is a new policy and this is the opportunity for educators to be developed in OBE (JE.L.1).

Lydia's response also reflects a fair understanding of the policy. What is interesting is how she pointed out the importance of teacher development in OBE and linking it to her understanding of DAS. In addition, her understanding of DAS also appeared to demonstrate an insight into the importance of training for the implementation process, which was central for effective implementation process, central for effective implementation of OBE. This gives support to what was cited by the other teachers especially Peter who highlighted the problem of teachers dealing with the challenge of change namely, OBE and C2005. The implication is that the lack of adequate training is likely to affect teachers' understanding and interpretation of the policy. This is due to the fact that understanding of the policy is not only limited to how the policy was conceived and developed, but also takes into consideration how teachers were informed and prepared for the implementation process.

In response to the question on the goals of the policy during interviews, these four teacher cases at John Edwards gave varied responses. For instance, the following comments reflect their views:

To improve the educators' performance. To acknowledge positive aspects of the educators performance (JE.E.HOD¹.2)

Knowing the correct way of teaching the children. The right way of introducing a lesson, and being aware of the outcomes before a lesson (JE.T.2)

They want to see educators with expertise placed correctly (JE.Mol.2)

In my opinion, the goal of DAS policy is to monitor the work of educators. It is a way of bringing quality into the educators work (JE.L.2)

A closer examination of the responses showed that teachers had a reasonably firm conceptualization of the goals of the policy. For instance, Elsie's and Lydia's responses directly address the goal of educator improvement. Lydia takes it a step further in raising the issue of quality in teachers' work, which is linked to collective performance in schools. Interestingly, Molapo's response, although not stated as explicitly as Elsie's and Lydia's, also implies teachers' development, which would lead teachers to improving classroom practice. Tonderai's response, although limited, also brings into focus the aspect of promoting good teaching practice.

5.2.1.1 Reflections on John Edwards Cases

On the whole, the collective understanding of the five teacher cases showed a fair and reasonable conceptualization of the policy. In addition, the narrative data generated from the teachers at John Edwards Primary revealed fairly informed responses on the goals of the policy as a result of their understanding of DAS policy. This understanding was dominated by themes such as standards, improvement, development, performance, professional satisfaction, skills, quality education, training and support.

Given the fair understanding as shown by these teachers, it was important to find out the kind of support that was available and which enabled them to go about in addressing the implementation process. It became evident through their responses that they received very little support and training from the provincial department of education. The following face-to-face interview with the teachers shed light on the extent to which they were given support.

In response to the question of how they went about implementing DAS and how they became aware of the policy, in addition to what he shared earlier on, Peter commented as follows:

An official from the department of education was invited by the principal who is very resourceful to the school to share information of the policy. Then I attended one workshop organized by the department of education. On return, we organized a workshop for all teachers, which I facilitated as DAS coordinator (JE.D.Pri.3).

For Elsie, Tonderai and Lydia, awareness of the policy was first raised when an official from the NWDE addressed them at the school. In addition, the workshop organized by the school also presented them with the opportunity to receive and share information. What they revealed is that policy documents were made available by the school to enable them to read (in order to familiarize themselves with the policy work place) before the school-based workshop. One positive aspect linked to awareness and training for implementation was where teachers acknowledged the support and information sharing by the deputy principal. Tonderai's response is a demonstration of the positive efforts undertaken by their school management to raise awareness and

clarify misunderstandings about the intentions of DAS policy. He commented as follows:

One negative emotion I felt is that I thought that this DAS is introduced to criticize our method of teaching as individuals, then I decided to join people who were complaining about it and not happy. After an explanation I received from management, I realized that it is a good thing to experience as an individual and then I resigned from that group (JE:T).

In addition, teachers also revealed that exposure to regular class visits by the principal made them open-minded when discussing the policy. Informal meetings in the staff room enabled teachers to discuss and talk freely about contentious issues regarding DAS.

It is evident from the above comments that teachers had received insignificant support and training from the provincial Department of Education, which affected teacher learning negatively. However, the support and information provided by the DAS coordinator was seen as useful in assisting them to clarify their understanding of the policy. Elsie captured this clearly where she said:

The deputy principal's explanations were clear, but what I like is that he is mindful of our needs as teachers and the challenges we are facing in all the policies (JE.HOD¹.2).

An examination of the responses of the five teacher cases showed that the teachers' professional identities as well as a supporting environment influenced the learning that occurred. Despite the fact that teachers demonstrated a fairly good understanding of DAS, teacher learning occurred differently for individual teachers.

For example, Peter's understanding of DAS was enhanced by his professional identity, which presented him with opportunities for learning about the policy and sharing his knowledge with other teachers. This was supported by his beliefs, that is, the positive outlook he adopted towards DAS, which he stressed throughout the interview sessions. The supportive school environment also made it possible for him to be receptive to DAS. In addition, for Peter, learning occurred through his own personal efforts such as taking the initiative to acquire more knowledge. For Elsie, learning did take place, but not with the same effect as in Peter's case. Although she

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is a departmental head tasked with assisting Peter to provide teachers with information about DAS, she seemed to have acquired little knowledge on her own. Her learning was a result of a supportive environment and collaboration.

For Tonderai, Molapo and Lydia who can be described as fairly new in the teaching profession in terms of experience, learning took place minimally through collegial support in the school context both formally and informally. Interestingly, although the school environment provided opportunities for learning, the lack of adequate advocacy and training affected effective learning on their part and this is revealed in Tonderai's limited understanding of DAS policy and the negative emotions and reactions teachers expressed about DAS. These initial negative perspectives also influenced the way they opened up for learning through DAS experiences.

5.2.2 Bareng Primary School

Bareng is a school situated in a rural community and it is moderately resourced. The four teachers interviewed i.e., the DAS coordinator, two departmental heads, and one ordinary teacher demonstrated insight about the policy and its main response to promoting quality education. Workload and overcrowded classes¹³ are challenges teachers are confronted with and can be cited as factors that prohibited teachers' in-depth reflection on their own work and development in relation to DAS.

¹³The problem of workload and overcrowded classes as a result of redeployment policy was highlighted by the principal of Bareng and the DAS coordinator.

Case # 6: Ruby

Ruby is a departmental head and a teacher in Human and Social Sciences learning area for grades 5 and 6 with three classes of ± 45 learners for each grade. She also offers Life Orientation (LO) to one Grade 7 class where she assists the other Life Orientation teacher. In addition, she is also the DAS coordinator in the school. Ruby, as an executive member of SADTU in the North West Province has had more exposure to DAS policy. This position enabled her to acquire more knowledge and insight about the policy. She is currently furthering her studies and has enrolled for a BA Honours degree.

Her understanding of the policy corresponds with the intention of DAS. DAS holds positive benefits for teachers. She demonstrated her insight of the policy as follows:

According to my understanding, DAS is a means of developing educators' approach to teaching and learning. It further aims at enabling educators to cope with new standards of learning and teaching. It also encourages team teaming. I also see it responding to the needs of educators and learners regarding curriculum change and the quality of learners we produce (Bar¹⁴:R.HOD².1)

Ruby's account revealed a very informed explanation and understanding of the policy. Her understanding of the policy can be ascribed to different factors. For instance, she is an active executive member of SADTU in the North West Province and this kind of critical issue around the policy was discussed. In addition, being the DAS coordinator in the school and also tasked with the responsibility of organizing meetings and workshops at the school to share information with other teachers. This assisted her to have a better understanding of DAS. In her case, learning was a result of external influence, which can be seen as political (union) collegial relationships as well as her professional identity. Her professional identity, that is as DAS coordinator and HOD presented her with opportunities for acquiring knowledge thus enhancing her learning.

¹⁴ Bar: Refers to Bareng Primary School where four teacher cases were selected.

Case # 7: Desiree

Desiree is a departmental head and a teacher in Economic and Management Sciences in grades 5 and 6, with three classes for each of the grades. There are 45 learners in each of the 6 classes. As a senior teacher in the school (teaching experience), she also assists the principal with the general discipline of the school. The one issue she raised as a problem with reference to the learning area she teaches was that she does not feel competent to teach it because she does not have any background to it. She is currently furthering her studies through the North West University in the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE), a 2-year programme. With reference to DAS activities in the school, she is a member of the School Development Team (SDT) that was responsible for the drawing up of the School Development Plan (SDP). Together with Ruby and Omega, she is involved in conducting workshops for teachers in DAS policy.

Desiree's understanding of DAS policy is more inclusive i.e. it does not only focus on educator development and improving the way they teach, but also includes learner improvement and the classroom environment. This implies that she sees the potential of DAS in improving all these aspects and thus finally improving the quality of education. Her fair understanding of the policy was expressed as follows:

DAS aims at developing the educator as a whole i.e. developing teaching methods, learning areas, pupils and teachers, books, classroom environment etc. and also upgrade the standard of education (Bar:D.HOD³.1

Case # 8: Omega

Omega is a departmental head and a teacher in Language, Literacy and Communication to grade 4 learners (4 classes of 35 learners for each class). In addition, she also teaches Life Orientation to two grade 6 classes. She assists one teacher for Computers with classes for the grade 6 learners on a voluntary basis. Recently, she was elected as a member of the School Governing Body (SGB) where she works on financial matters. As a fairly new teacher in the school, Omega is energetic and enthusiastic about her work. She has the added responsibility of helping teachers where possible, on matters concerning DAS, and she is also a member of the SDT, working in close cooperation with the DAS coordinator and Desiree.

Her explanation of DAS policy was expressed in the following terms:

It is a way in which educators get assistance to develop themselves by improving their preparation of lessons, and teaching methods. This was in response to the need for teacher development not only in the classroom, but also in general as it covers a series of topics e.g. leadership (Bar.O.HOD[†].1).

Her insight of the policy emphasizes teacher improvement in the different aspects viz. classroom practice and self-improvement in areas such as leadership and teacher professionalism.

Case # 9: Maggy

Maggy is a teacher offering Natural Sciences to grades 5 and 6 (six classes) with a total of ±270 learners combined. As the only person in charge of Computer classes for grade 6 learners, she worked in close cooperation with Omega. She is also a member of the fund raising committee, and is currently involved in a project to raise funds for the school to equip the Computer Laboratory with additional computers as well as purchasing books for the school library that is poorly resourced.

Omega's understanding of DAS policy was fairly good and it highlighted the main aspects of the policy, which she expressed as follows:

A system that is there to develop educators so that they improve in their field in order to be effective as educators so that the standard of education is improved. I think DAS was necessary so that the educators could receive the necessary skills that they lack (Bar:Mag.1).

5.2.2.1 Reflections on the Bareng Cases

The three teachers (Desiree, Omega and Maggy) demonstrated a fairly good understanding of DAS policy. Furthermore, as departmental heads, Desiree and Omega also worked closely with the DAS coordinator in preparing and presenting information to the rest of the teachers in the school. Working closely on DAS gave them a chance to have a fair grasp of the policy. Maggy, revealed that she had always been the kind of teacher who sought knowledge, thus her talking to the DAS coordinator, the principal and the other two departmental heads enabled her to gain a better understanding of the policy. Their understanding of DAS can be attributed to learning through collaborative encounters with the DAS coordinator and as departmental heads tasked with training other teachers. This made it possible for them to acquire knowledge and at the same time enhancing professional learning.

In response to the question on the goals of the policy, the four teachers' responses covered two broad goals of the policy i.e. educator improvement and promoting good teaching practice. Ruby's account warrants singling out because it makes reference to how learners could benefit, given teachers' participation in the implementation of the policy. She commented as follows:

To empower educators so as to improve quality of teaching and produce learners who will be marketable and be able to face changes and challenges (Bar.R.HOD².2).

Interestingly with the above response, Ruby also clearly brings to the fore how teacher development through DAS is likely to affect learners coming out of the school system. What can be inferred is that with teacher learning through DAS there are

likely to be improvements on learners probably as a result of changes in classroom practice.

Their understanding was also characterized by themes such as development, improvement of teaching and learning, learner improvement, quality, standards and leadership which demonstrated insight on what the policy is all about.

With reference to the implementation of DAS policy and how they came to know about the policy for the first time, the three teachers, i.e. Desiree, Omega and Maggy revealed that they first came to know about the policy through the principal, while Ruby received information through her participation in SADTU activities. Ruby revealed that the problems of inadequate training and information on OBE, affected teachers negatively. This is supported by Omega's comments, which demonstrated her frustrations.

We have not been adequately prepared for OBE, what can we expect from DAS? I am still not sure about many things on OBE (Bar:O.HOD⁴.2).

The major problem teachers at their school experienced came with the distribution of the materials for the workshops. The four teachers plus the principal were the only ones who had access to the material on DAS policy. The school had a very small photocopier, which had not worked for some time because of lack of funds for the repair work. The principal used her own money to make a few copies available for sharing. This meant that not all teachers had their own copies of the policy, and some had probably not read it.

The Bareng teacher cases demonstrated diverse behaviour and views about learning from DAS. Ruby's learning was influenced by outside factors (interaction with union structures), her exposure to the policy as a coordinator and supportive leadership. The other teachers, Maggy, Omega and Desiree, attributed supportive leadership with having presented them with opportunities for learning that enabled them to have a better understanding of DAS. Although the principal secured materials and made it possible for teachers to receive training at school level, most teachers bore no collective responsibility for the progress and implementation of DAS because they

were divided about the benefits of DAS. The teachers were critical about the kind of advocacy provided and the lack of support from the NWDE, which can be viewed as having impacted on their learning in a negative way. What teachers indicated was that the advocacy at school level helped to shape their attitudes and raise their levels of awareness, thus for them learning in context occurred on a minimal level. For these teachers learning was mostly inhibited by lack of resources, workload and overcrowded classes.

5.2.3 Retlafihla Primary School

Retlafihla Primary School is a poorly resourced rural school situated on a farm. The school has a serious problem of shortage of teachers because the farmer fired two teachers reducing the number to three, including the principal. Thus, teachers are overloaded in terms of the number of subjects and classes. There is no School Governing Body (SGB) because the farmer is in charge and runs the school like his own farm. The NWDE has not intervened to resolve the matter despite numerous efforts from the principal requesting them to take action. The farm owner also imposed restrictions on their movements or on anybody who comes to the school. All the teachers in the school were interviewed i.e. principal, DAS coordinator and one teacher. The three teachers showed varied and to some extent limited understanding of DAS.

Case # 10: Zolile

Zolile is a principal at Retlafihla Primary, who, during the interview sessions indicates that he is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree studies through the University of South Africa (UNISA). He teaches Mathematics and Natural Sciences to Grades 5, 6 and 7 learners. Apart from teaching, he has the responsibility of handling administrative matters, which also include reporting to the farmer whenever called upon to do so.

Zolile's understanding of DAS was fairly good and it also corresponded with the policy intentions. For instance, he commented as follows:

It is the way of finding out about the challenges and problems teachers face on a day-to-day basis, and trying to find solutions in order to improve the quality of education and training by empowering the teacher. DAS was responding to the needs of teachers in trying to improve the quality of education and training. It was necessary because there was a great deal of negligence amongst the educators after the inspection system was phased out (Ret: Pri.1)¹⁵.

His understanding of the policy can be attributed to the fact that as a principal of a school with no resources and only two other teachers to teach all the grades, on receiving information on the policy, he has to gain a good understanding and knowledge to share with the other teachers.

Case # 11: Selbie

Selbie is a departmental head, and a teacher in Language, Literacy and Communication, Human and Social Sciences, Economics and Management Sciences and Technology in Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7, and she also shares Technology with the principal for the Grades 6 and 7. In addition she is also DAS coordinator for the school. She is classified as underqualified because she holds a Primary Teachers' Certificate. She is currently upgrading her qualifications through North West University where she has enrolled for the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE), a two-year qualification.

She showed lack of understanding of DAS policy. Her lack of understanding revealed gaps in knowledge about the policy. During the interview on policy understanding

¹⁵ Ret: Pri. Refers to Retlafihla Primary School with the Principal as the respondent.

she expressed it as follows:

A panel selected by yourself will evaluate you, to identify the weakness of a teacher that should be addressed in a workshop etc (Ret:S.HOD⁵.1).

Selbie's first statement is a clear demonstration of lack of understanding, which can be attributed to various factors. The main problem in her case is capacity building that is necessary for providing basic knowledge and understanding, which are essential for the implementation process.

Case # 12: Madipuo

Madipuo is a teacher responsible for the Foundation Phase learners i.e. grades 1, 2 and 3 where she teaches Numeracy, Life Orientation and Language, Literacy and Communication. She is unqualified because she has no formal teaching qualification. The principal described her as a committed, valuable and an enthusiastic teacher. She has always taught in farm schools and this was her tenth year at Retlafihla Primary School.

She demonstrated a lack of adequate understanding of DAS policy, which she expressed as follows:

To help us find our weak points in teaching. To help us develop ourselves. In the beginning we had a negative attitude towards DAS, but because we were told that it wasn't an inspection, but an eye-opener. It will be relevant to OBE system and will help to build self-confidence and self-esteem (Ret:Mad.1).

A closer examination of the interpretation of the policy by the two teacher cases at the school revealed a lack of understanding, with the exception of the principal who demonstrated a fairly good understanding of the policy. This understanding covered themes such as improvement, quality of education, empowering teachers, identifying weaknesses, development, self-confidence, and self-esteem.

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In response to the question on the goals of the policy, the principal's comments also corresponded with the policy intentions. His insight was revealed as follows:

The main goals of DAS were to find the challenges and problems faced by teaches, help them to overcome the problems by finding out simple and workable solutions (Ret: Pri.2).

Given the above, it was necessary to find out how the implementation of DAS i.e. advocacy was addressed. In addition, it was also important to understand the environment under which the policy unfolded. The teachers became aware of the policy through the principal who also attended workshops, which, as he indicated, helped to clarify understanding of the policy. He held meetings with the other two teachers to discuss the policy in detail. On the other hand, Selbie, who was made DAS coordinator by the principal, only attended one workshop organized by the Department of Education. For the most part, they relied on each other to increase their knowledge on DAS policy. Madipuo did not get the opportunity to attend workshops, but came to know about the policy through the principal and Selbie, who also made materials available for her.

5.2.3.1 Reflections of Retlafihla Cases

For teachers at this school, DAS unfolded under difficult conditions, that is, hostile environment that had a combination of negative pressure conflicts, and lack of support from the NWDE, which had adverse effects on teacher learning. Whilst teachers indicated that they relied on one another i.e. sought out their colleagues to address DAS issues, the interactions were unplanned and did not focus on deeper understanding. It can be inferred that the interactions addressed mundane and possibly survival issues (given the school environment) with little impact on the teacher learning. Implementation of DAS following the guidelines outlined under policy context in Chapter 2 was not possible. No official from the NWDE had visited the school to assist in sorting out the challenges they faced.

In examining the fit between the reform agenda, the teachers' knowledge and understanding, the narrative account from the twelve teacher cases showed that they interpreted DAS policy with different capacities, dispositions and resources. The importance of effective advocacy cannot be overemphasized as it is central to understanding the policy and to pave the way for teacher learning as well as implementation because teachers tend to resist policies they do not understand. One of the teachers said the following:

I wanted to leave the workshop with a clearer understanding of what DAS is, and how it will help me to improve as a teacher. I am not sure what to say because I need clarity. I still feel that I don't understand why we should do DAS (Ret: S.HOD⁵.2).

Although teachers pointed out that there was internal school support (formal and informal) that provided opportunities for discussions on the policy, which resulted in raising the level of awareness, it is evident that for Selbie and Madipuo no learning took place and this is supported by lack of understanding of the policy due to lack of advocacy and training. The negative school context excluded opportunities for learning.

5.3 General Overview

Although the policy intentions of DAS were good and clearly understood by most teachers, they were rather undermined by the flawed implementation process that resulted in the policy unfolding in an uneven manner. The various responses in terms of understanding also revealed the different ways in which the policy was understood, i.e. teachers constructed different meanings of the policy.

The differences that emerged can be attributed to the kind of training received, leadership support, and school environment. DAS coordinators, for John Edwards and Bareng Primary schools, were more informed and they were seen as having helped to create a climate in which teachers could examine not only their understanding of the policy, but even their attitudes and involvement and thus paving the way for teacher learning. On the other hand, some teachers were critical of DAS coordinators whom they saw as providing information without any useful clarity. For

instance, inability to fill the gaps (OBE, DAS and WSE) was often cited. The lack of clarity can be viewed as a limitation for promoting effective teacher learning.

On the whole, for the teacher cases in the three varying resource contexts, collaboration was viewed as a critical learning activity through which sharing of knowledge, which promoted both formal and informal learning, took place.

For John Edwards and Bareng cases, school environment did promote possibilities for teacher learning, in ways that are subtle. This is largely due to the fact that the impact of school environment can be minimal given the personal nature of teacher learning. For example, in John Edwards, although the environment was supportive, there are certain aspects that affected teacher learning negatively, viz. negative teachers who were uncooperative and the principal's leadership style, which was perceived by some teachers as authoritarian. For the teacher cases at Bareng, their environment was also negatively influenced by inadequate resources, workload and overcrowded classes and these impacted negatively on teacher learning. Teachers at John Edwards, Bareng and the principal from Retlafihla had learned about what DAS is and its goals, but application could not be guaranteed.

Finally, in analyzing teachers' understanding of the policy, it was important to look at contributions of who they are, that is, teacher biography and its possible influence on their orientation to change. This includes reflecting on issues such as: What makes teachers who they are? What informs their views? What makes them learn the way they do? Biographies of the twelve teacher cases helped in providing clarity on why the learning process, insights and understanding become possible, because learning and change are situated in the teachers' own biography. What emerged through findings was that teaching experience and self-development in terms of furthering studies, and level of qualifications appeared to play a meaningful role in assisting teachers to address the issue of policy understanding. The divergent experiences of the twelve teacher cases are therefore reflected in their identities. Although some teachers had negative experiences of inspection, it was their subsequent experiences with the DAS policy that had an effect on who they were. Gender did not have any influence on teachers, that is, a variable such as gender could not be linked to teachers perceptions and understanding of the policy.

On the whole, teachers' understanding of the policy varied from fair to poor and it differed in levels of knowledge and depth of understanding. In contrast, what can be raised as a concern is the extent to which the implementation of DAS took into consideration teachers' conceptions and experiences they brought into the reform agenda.

5.4 The Relationship Between Teachers Understandings of DAS Policy and their Experiences of Inspection

The data generated thus far raises an important question, namely, Is there a relationship between teacher understandings of DAS and their prior experiences of inspection? What prompted me to address this aspect was because of the emerging findings as presented through teachers' narrative accounts. In addition, it is important to note that if teachers showed a lack of understanding about the policy, it would not be possible for development to take place. Teachers' prior knowledge, experience, and attitudes are likely to influence their interpretation, meanings and how they implement or choose not to implement a policy such as DAS. Peter's comments showed the initial perception he held about DAS as a result of his previous experience:

Most of us had a lot of negative perceptions about the proposed changes in the education system. It therefore came as no surprise that we perceived the DAS system in the same negative light. The idea I had was that it is unfair to be evaluated when you are going through a transitional stage. The fact that a report would be written and kept in a file suggested that this was an official document that would remain in one's personal file and that this file should accompany you wherever you would go made me very apprehensive about the whole system (JE:D.Pri.).

It is also important to understand that DAS policy could have been interpreted as a threat due to past experiences of the inspection system. For some teachers, the DAS experience was more like an enactment of the inspection system, or as others pointed, it was simply an old sheep with a new skin. Therefore, negative experiences such as inspection, can influence teacher learning in significant ways.

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For instance, Desiree, who had experienced inspection before, brought her own knowledge, beliefs and attitudes that affected the possibility of opening up for the appraisal process and learning from DAS experiences. Her negative experiences were revealed as follows:

My experience of appraisal or inspection as it used to be called is not a pleasant one. It was a torture and a monster to teachers as it focused mainly on the mistakes of teachers than to assist them. Teachers were not made to be free in their work but always to be on their toes. It was not a process but an event. It was not meant to develop a teacher but to discredit her. We are told that DAS will develop us as teachers, but I am not so sure, we will see (Bar:D.HOD³.2).

Interestingly, despite the negative experiences demonstrated above, she showed a fair understanding of the policy (refer to Bar: D.HOD³.1). Implicit in her last statement is that she will probably open herself up for DAS experiences although there is still the initial scepticism and the belief that the policy is not likely to work. The scepticism can be viewed as a negative perception that affected learning significantly.

In support of the above views by Desiree, Ruby shared her previous experience about inspection and the influence it had on her initial understanding about DAS policy. She commented as follows:

On learning about the programme, I was reminded of surprise visits kind of system where in the school administration, especially the principal, will be given the task of checking up on teachers and the inspectors who came to schools to find fault with our teaching. It was later made clear in a workshop for in-service training that the system would be teacher friendly and it should take place with proper consultation between the appraisee and the coordinating committee (Bar:R.HOD²).

It can be inferred that previous experience about inspection, initially had a negative effect on her learning. The training workshops she attended raised her awareness and thus changed her perception about DAS. This change in perception implies that learning did occur which ultimately enhanced her understanding of DAS.

Zolile, on the other hand, presented a rather complex situation, which showed various factors at play in terms of influencing not only the understanding of DAS policy, but also the challenges that affect teacher learning during the implementation process. He supported the fact that a teacher's prior experience influenced individual beliefs and understanding of DAS. He gave his insight as follows:

The main challenge facing DAS is that almost all the teachers linked it to the old inspection system because of the way it was presented. This made it almost unacceptable to most of the teachers in the service. Another one is dishonesty amongst the teachers in panels and teachers bias. DAS provides the opportunity to the teacher, assessing him/herself at the same time allowing others to let you know about your weaknesses as a teacher then trying to find solutions to improve your way of teaching and doing things on duty. For us in our school, I don't think we will be in a position to develop as I have said. Teachers need a lot of help with OBE. They don't have enough training, now we have a problem of staff for example three teachers handling all grades is not acceptable. Our situation is such that, DAS will not change much because we cannot implement it as we are required to do (Ret: Pri).

Zolile's narrative account revealed an informed explanation, i.e., negative attitude towards DAS because of the perception that it was a form of inspection, and likely to affect not only teacher learning, but even effective implementation process. Lack of proper training in OBE is also seen as a continuing problem with the facilitators ill-equipped in promoting teacher learning and ensuring successful implementation. The scenario presented supports the assertion that previous experience and knowledge could be stumbling blocks not only towards understanding of the policy but also in allowing teachers to open up for opportunities that enhance teacher learning.

A closer examination of Peter's account showed that he is also conscious of the legacy of inspection among teachers:

Many educators still see it as a type of inspection system. The challenge is in changing the mindset of educators and to instill a positive attitude in them with regard to DAS. People always fear change and need to be convinced that the change advocated is the best option. If educators and panels are honest in their discussions and findings, DAS could help to determine areas for development and suggest activities that could assist in the development of the educator (JE: D. Pri).

Peter's response demonstrated that he acknowledged that DAS held possibilities for change, which may promote teacher learning. He believed that positive effects could be seen if teachers moved away from viewing DAS in the same light as the inspection process.

On the whole, teaching experience influenced the way teachers initially perceived DAS, that is, older teachers in the system constantly brought "inspection" into the discussion. But this did not necessarily influence all of them negatively, and this can be attributed to their willingness to accept change and to learn from it. Teachers also commented that understanding of DAS policy helped to clarify some of the existing misconceptions as explored earlier on. On the other hand, some teachers revealed that understanding was not influenced by previous experience on inspection but was rather influenced by (further studies) self-development. This supports the assertion that teacher learning is influenced by various factors, for example, teacher personal characteristics, work context, social, cultural and political factors.

Section Two

5.5 Different Stages of the Developmental Appraisal System: Their Effects on Teacher Learning and Development

In this Section I explore the extent to which DAS promoted professional development and provided opportunities for teacher learning. It is thus important to point out that professional development implies learning by the teacher. Learning becomes visible when there is a positive change in the teacher's practice, knowledge and attitudes. When teachers have learned something new they are more likely to act differently. In addition, through the conceptual framework, teacher learning has been shown to be a complex web of knowledge and experiences both within and outside the classroom. But implicit in DAS policy, was the expectation that knowledge acquired would enhance teacher development and be used to promote quality education. Therefore, DAS was seen as a tool for stimulating professional growth and development.

DAS stages are important in that they require teachers to reflect critically on their practice, knowledge and attitudes, which are important components of the teacher learning that promotes professional development. The various stages of the appraisal process are grounded on the premise that in a system of developmental appraisal, aspects such as openness, trust and collegiality are considered as important. This presents teachers with the opportunity to reveal information about themselves that would not otherwise be revealed in a system that is judgemental. While helpful for understanding general patterns of teacher development, they do not go far enough to understand the differences in the complex process of teacher learning.

What has to be considered when presenting and analyzing the effects of DAS on teacher learning are the contentious issues in the appraisal system, i.e. encouraging and enhancing teacher development on the one hand and on the other seeing the teacher as an implementer of policies developed from the top. The latter is unlikely to influence how teachers view the policy in relation to their professional growth and development.

Furthermore, I need to point out some of the limitations I experienced with the two probes for collecting data from teachers. The critical incident reports and diaries did not yield much information. Despite the fact that I gave teachers guidelines and made follow-ups, the end result was that most teachers were not willing to cooperate. What compounded the problem was the fact that teachers were only appraised once then thereafter the policy was put on hold. For fear of losing them as the third group of participants in my study, I did not pressurise them. I only managed to obtain data from five teachers, which was not very different from what they had expressed during the semi-structured interviews. On a more critical note, I found it difficult to raise “scholarly arguments” about the DAS policy, because technically, the policy did not take off as expected.

In addition, although I made follow-ups in order to further explore teachers’ responses on how DAS had influenced their professional learning, teachers were not really forthcoming in showing and explaining how DAS influenced them. They talked in vague terms about how it has helped them to gain new knowledge, change their classroom practices and their attitudes. Whilst issues of teacher knowledge, change in

attitudes, training and support surfaced throughout the interviews with teachers, no one mentioned DAS as an avenue for teacher learning, i.e., teachers did not speak explicitly in terms of learning.

Furthermore, although initiatives such as DAS attempted to present opportunities for teacher learning, it should be noted that teacher development, in particular teacher learning, is a highly personal and complex process. On the whole, responses varied from teacher to teacher even within the same school context. Themes that emerged focused on training, leadership support, school climate/environment, change in attitude, formal and informal learning, development, acquiring knowledge, and resources.

These central themes clearly captured the essence of the policy, thus determining the scope of what has to be done to realize the policy intentions. Whether this is likely to be achieved within the identified scope is a different issue altogether. Interestingly, despite the fact that teachers demonstrated a fair understanding of the policy as findings showed in Section One, inadequate advocacy and training did not pave the way for teachers to engage effectively with DAS policy through the various stages which are presented as follows:

5.5.1 Preparation for Appraisal

Preparation as a stage in the appraisal process is essential for teachers to be clear about policy intentions. It can be viewed from different perspectives as it involves different activities all aiming at the professional development of the teacher.

In the first instance, class visits, and individual teacher observation are activities that were seen by teachers as having supported and prepared them for the appraisal process. John Edwards and Bareng Primary Schools have established traditions of organized procedures of class visits and teacher observation by the principal, deputy principal and departmental heads, and were viewed as having prepared them professionally, and to some extent paved the way for opening up to learning through the developmental appraisal system. Guidelines known to all teachers are used during the visits. This is seen as having contributed towards stimulating teachers to engage

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in discussions and sharing ideas, thus talking freely about their areas of need. Furthermore, it is important to look at this activity together with establishing a positive and supportive environment, which involves teachers participating in the processes. Peter emphasized the school climate by stating the following:

Our school has a special ethos of positive spirit of working together. Teachers are encouraged to talk about their experiences, problems and we support each other (JE:D.Pri.3)

Ruby also viewed the school environment as essential in the process of preparing for appraisal. She revealed the following about her school:

Our school does not have resources like in the other Model C schools, but it is not bad. This makes us feel that we are better than other schools in the neighbourhood. Generally, teachers help each other although not all, but most of the teachers cooperate and this is because the principal is very supportive (Bar:R.HOD.²3).

Secondly, preparation for appraisal is examined in conjunction with the advocacy process (refer to Section One), which paved the way for enhancing understanding, and the implementation of DAS policy. Thus, preparation for appraisal involved training of teachers to enable them to participate meaningfully during the appraisal process. The training was informed by various activities such as workshops by the NWDE and at school level, receiving and reading the policy document, meetings and getting feedback. Information gathering and preparation activities do serve as opportunities for learning if they are productive and well organized.

With specific reference to reading and discussing the policy during school meetings all teachers with the exception of Madipuo, reported that they had been given the policy document and had read it. However, this varied from teacher to teacher. The extracts from Peter's diary and critical incident report reflected an honest perspective about his feelings where he commented as follows:

The first thought that came to my mind was, what is this nonsense Again?. I then decided to read the document to familiarize myself with DAS, especially because of my position in the school. There were a few of the criteria that I felt needed attention. I felt confident about most of them and believed that I was ready to implement them. In

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reading the documents, I developed a broadened understanding (JE:D.Pri.4).

Although at first, Peter was sceptical about DAS, reading about it enabled him to familiarize himself with the policy with positive benefits such as change of attitude, which implied learning on his part and thus preparing him for the implementation process.

The positive benefits as a result of reading about the policy were also experienced by Ruby who indicated the following:

As a DAS coordinator for our school I attended workshops when DAS was first introduced. I had to read more because on arrival at the school I had to share information with the other staff members. This was helpful because I felt that I was prepared for implementation (Bar:R.HOD².4).

Ruby and Peter were presented with opportunities for learning which enabled them to have a fair grasp of the policy because of their positions in the respective schools. For the two coordinators preparation for appraisal held positive benefits for their professional learning. For Maggy, the preparation stage served to reinforce what was already common practice for her. She expressed her experience as follows:

My development is influenced by the fact that I read a lot, even in my family, I constantly engage in discussions about different issues with my husband who is also a teacher. I tend to learn from different situations. So, reading the DAS documents was not a problem. It also made it easy for me to participate meaningfully during meetings (Bar:Mag.2).

A closer examination at Maggy's comments does not only confirm that learning is influenced by different factors, but goes further by highlighting that it can be informal and enhanced by factors outside the school context. In Maggy's case, reading, and constant discussions appeared to have played a role in her development. This made it possible for her to engage with the DAS policy on a more informed level.

In contrast, other teachers met preparation with apprehension. For instance, some only saw the benefits of the appraisal policy towards their professional development once they had overcome their fears and they received clarity, which enabled them to learn from DAS. However, others did not see any benefits, which implied that the preparation stage did not influence them to open up for learning and the implementation process. For example, with regard to his preparation for appraisal, which he viewed as having influenced him positively Molapo gave his comments as follows:

The principal and his deputy (Peter) who were supportive helped in calming our fears. Meetings were held at the school where we raised several concerns and issues that were addressed. The other good thing is that Peter was always available to provide information whenever the need arose (JE:Mol.2).

If one takes a serious look at Molapo's statements regarding the preparation for appraisal it seems very clear that different factors are at play in promoting learning from DAS. For example, discussions (both formal and informal) and leadership support seemed to have had an impact on his preparation for appraisal. These factors supported what was raised by Maggy earlier on, in revealing that teacher learning and teacher development as processes are influenced by various factors.

Furthermore, at the same level of investigation on the negative perspective regarding the preparation for implementation, Madipuo said the following:

I have not really read the policy document. I only read other materials, which were given to me by the principal. To be honest, I don't see why we should bother with all the things we are told. For us DAS is not going to work (Ret:Mad.2).

Madipuo's response gives further weight to the perceived poor advocacy of the policy by the NWDE. Through proper advocacy of the policy, her level of awareness and understanding the need for such a policy would be raised. In addition, Madipuo is one teacher who was told about the policy by the principal, and given the situation in their school, i.e., shortage of staff, she never had the opportunity to attend any workshop organized by the provincial Department of Education. In short, she was never

formally trained on the policy. This showed that in her case, learning could not occur as a result of the constraints indicated.

The above concerns attest to the fact that the implementation of DAS generated a lot of controversy and negative reactions within the NWP. In summarizing this first part on preparation for appraisal, the following can be indicated: most teachers pointed out the usefulness of the policy handbook in guiding and offering clarity on policy intentions of DAS, whilst others felt that reading through the guidelines for appraisal was rather cumbersome and confusing (referring to the 13 criteria as outlined in the policy document: Appendix D). These showed that teacher learning was affected both positively and negatively.

Furthermore, reading on their own, gaining knowledge through discussions during meetings in preparation for appraisal were seen as having contributed towards changes in attitudes. These activities not only implied professional development, but also teacher learning. What is problematic is clearly articulating the kinds of learning that took place because of the complex nature of the process.

Secondly, training in the form of workshops was seen as an essential process in introducing DAS. Training for appraisal needs to be informed by various issues particularly recognition of what constitutes effective teacher learning and professional development. Although some teachers indicated that they benefited something from the training workshops, there were problems, which surfaced and affected the process negatively. These included the following:

- The inadequacy and ineffectiveness of training the trainer cascade model
- Gaps in knowledge of official facilitators
- Taking teachers out of their classrooms, where there was a shortage of teachers, was a major problem
- Inadequate training from OBE, and it spilled over to training for DAS
- Lack of resources
- Difficulty in maintaining the impetus and enthusiasm for training by the NWDE.

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In this inquiry teachers were required to describe ways in which they engaged in formally organized activities. These helped to shed light on the extent to which teachers might have learned and grown professionally as a result of the training they received. The responses of the DAS coordinators in the three schools varied from that of other teachers because of the kind of preparation they received, access to materials, and their positions, which required them to cascade information and training to other teachers.

Peter's response demonstrated positive benefits of the training received when he commented as follows:

As a DAS coordinator in the school, I think the training I received prepared me for appraisal. Before implementation, I attended two workshops arranged by the department of education. The workshops helped in making me aware of the importance of DAS and how it can help me improve. The problem I had with attending these workshops is that they disrupted my classes. I also changed my attitude because at first I thought it was the same as inspection. The third workshop was held at our school where the rest of the teachers were involved. The problem we had with the official who conducted the workshop is that he was not very knowledgeable; he could not answer some of the question the teachers asked him (JE:D.Pri.5).

The response given by Peter supported what he saw as adequate preparation for implementation. What I found rather surprising with his response is his reference to the two workshops as having prepared him for implementation. But if his experience is only directed at awareness of the importance of the policy, then the training received might be adequate. He also indicated that these contributed towards changing his attitude, which was negative as a result of his previous experience of the inspection system. The change in attitude is the one theme that emerged throughout the inquiry with the majority of the teachers. Interestingly, teachers were not able to clearly articulate how the change in attitude enhanced their learning. Peter also expressed concern at some of the negative aspects of training in preparation for appraisal, that is, class disruptions and workshop facilitators who lacked adequate knowledge. The gap in knowledge seemed to have contributed to teachers' insufficient understanding of the policy as well as their scepticism about professional growth and learning as a result of DAS experiences.

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Peter revealed that attending the workshops provided him with the opportunity to interact with different groups of teachers, who were both negative and positive about the policy. He stressed that he met teachers who influenced him positively and thus approached the preparation process on a positive note. This implies that for him, the collaborative encounters influenced his learning positively.

Ruby also pointed out the advantages of attending workshops organized by the provincial department of education, i.e., meeting other teachers and sharing experiences and said the following:

As a DAS coordinator for our school I have attended several workshops. I attended two workshops for training when DAS was first introduced. These were followed by workshops for the resuscitation process. I think I attended about three workshops, which prepared me well for the appraisal. This was possible because our principal is someone who always goes out to get information. Two more teachers were selected to attend the two DAS resuscitation workshops. Then what we will do is to workshop other teachers (Bar:R.HOD².4).

In addition, Ruby's narrative account revealed two of the concerns which were constantly raised by teachers in preparation for appraisal, that is, inadequate training for OBE and the lack of adequate knowledge displayed by the official facilitators.

For DAS to work well there should be more training. One of the main problems here is that teachers will always ask questions about OBE where they said they still needed help. To go back to the question of training, the Department of Education in the province should make sure that their official facilitators are well trained and have enough background to answer most of the questions the teachers ask them (R:HOD²).

Although she was positive about the benefits of training, Ruby felt that more was needed, which supports the view that continuous training is necessary for teachers to open up for learning experiences and to be adequately prepared for the appraisal process.

Selbie, on the other hand, revealed that the training received was inadequate to successfully prepare her for the implementation of DAS policy. The training she received was superficial and seemed not to have presented her with meaningful

opportunities for learning or prepared her for the appraisal process. She commented as follows:

I only attended one workshop. In our school the problem is, there are only three teachers to teach grades 1 to 7. The principal attended the other workshops. We talked about DAS. We do not have time to visit each other's classes. We have a problem because we are few in our school. We do not discuss other things because we do not have time, I have to teach many learning areas for four grades. I do not see how DAS is going to help us because we don't have much. The principal tries to help us but he also teaches three grades and the other problem is that he has to attend many meetings, and I have to look after his classes most of the time (Ret:S.HOD⁵.3).

In addition to inadequate training received, Selbie's account is a demonstration of how teachers are constrained by lack of resources and time. In her school, teachers take on various activities, for example, teaching many subjects at different grade levels. Taking on these many responsibilities also influenced their own development and learning as a result of DAS. They are also not able to spend adequate time discussing with colleagues because of the challenges they are faced with. This can be seen as reinforcing teacher isolation, which will not foster shared knowledge, thus affecting teacher learning negatively.

Selbie's account also demonstrated concern about inadequate training for OBE as a continuation of inadequate training for DAS. In her case, opportunities for preparation for appraisal were not encouraging enough to have a sustaining effect. She remarked as follows:

The problem we have in our school is OBE, Curriculum 2005. We did not get enough training. We are still not sure about many things. So, when you have to be appraised for DAS, your lesson is OBE and how do you get assessed about that when you do not know it very well. I can say training for DAS was not enough, and this is serious, again training for OBE was not enough (S:HOD⁵).

It is evident from the above responses that Selbie is sceptical about learning and professional development at this initial stage of preparation for DAS. On the whole, responses from the three DAS coordinators showed that some form of preparation did take place, although the basic support from within varied for the different school

contexts. It can be inferred that the kind of preparation they received also reflects the possibilities for learning through the activities.

Training for the other teachers varied from school to school and also seemed to have been affected by the school climate. Teachers viewed the training as inadequate and raised the general concern of receiving incoherent and sometimes conflicting information that did not help in preparing them for appraisal. There was also general scepticism about the perceived “teacher professional development” emanating from their frustrations which affected their learning negatively. For example, Molapo, Elsie, Lydia and Tonderai from John Edwards Primary School all participated in one workshop, which started at 9h00 and ended at 12h00, as part of their preparation for appraisal. Other discussions, as they indicated, took place during lunch in the staff room. Comments by Molapo and Elsie also revealed other concerns, which were raised by other teachers:

There are too many changes taking place at the same time, you have no time to deal with these properly. Too many policies are coming out. So, I feel I have not been prepared for DAS (JE:Mol.3).

Elsie supports the lack of preparation as pointed out by her colleague. She also rated her preparation for DAS as poor given her exposure to the kind of training that was made available coupled with the challenge of many policies they have to deal with. Policy overload was a concern raised by most teachers, and it seemed to affect teachers negatively in their professional development. So Elsie remarked:

When do you get the time to learn about what is expected of DAS? Look at the training we received. This is stressful (JE:E.HOD¹.3).

Desiree and Omega have each attended two training workshops conducted by the NWDE. Initially, Maggy only attended one workshop, but the principal made arrangements for her to attend an additional workshop by the NWDE. Maggy’s response revealed her frustrations with the inadequate training she had received. She also expressed the view that the expectations for teacher learning were not met with

the necessary support, because the opportunities for preparation were not grounded in meaningful activities:

Training was not done thoroughly. I was and am still not impressed with this system. It was not well structured and not well implemented. People who formulate these systems have the theoretical know how, but lack the practical aspect. Everything done in our country is done by people sitting in posh, fancy offices and not people who have to sit in the stuffy classrooms from day-to-day. If it is properly implemented, it would work (Bar:Mag.3).

Some of the workshops were conducted at school level by the DAS coordinator assisted by the two department heads. Omega's response showed one main problem with workshops at school level:

Having to workshop other teachers is not easy, because you might leave out information that is useful to them. Your understanding of issues is different, so it is better for all teachers to attend workshops by the NWDE. Teachers always ask you about OBE and how DAS can help them. Those who run the workshops are unable to answer them truthfully because they do not know what the department is doing. Our coordinators do not tell us about some of discussions with the department (Bar:O.HOD⁴.3).

The above sentiments expressed by Omega were also shared by other teachers and supported their views that they still felt inadequately prepared for appraisal. On the whole, teachers presented different experiences with regard to any benefits from the workshops, which for some seemed not to have presented them with positive opportunities for learning and professional growth. On the other hand, teachers viewed the benefits in terms of change of attitude about the appraisal process. This is supported by Desiree who pointed out the following:

Although I have benefited from the workshops, I feel that more should be done to complete the process and make teachers feel well prepared. The other problem for our school is that educators are overloaded, and doing DAS is extra work for which we are not remunerated (Bar:D.HOD³).

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Interestingly, though she claims to have benefited from the training received, she brings in a key issue, which is central to successful preparation for DAS, that is, continuous efforts at preparing teachers. The last statement about remuneration showed a more negative perspective, which may be an indication of an underlying negative attitude towards the policy. On the whole, for DAS to succeed, teachers need to go into it with a positive attitude.

Zolile and Madipuo from Retlafihla Primary School supported the sentiments expressed by the DAS coordinator regarding the effects of negative school environment, lack of resources and support as factors that hampered preparation for appraisal and opportunities for learning and development. Zolile presented more informed concerns regarding preparation for DAS and successful implementation through the following comments:

I have gained useful information to prepare myself for DAS, but the situation in our school demoralizes me, and I feel that DAS is not worth it. The problem is putting it into practice; the real situation does not allow that. For example, if Selbie and I have to visit Madipuo what is going to happen to all the classes? Even if it's one teacher, it is still a problem. I remember that the number of times I have to attend workshops or meetings, Selbie and Madipuo had to look after my class which is adding to their burden. We try to support one another, but most of the time when we get to talk, it is often about our problems and frustrations. Schools like ours should not be expected to implement DAS like schools in the towns or other communities, because DAS does not work here. How can it develop us? (Ret: Pri.3).

It can be inferred from the above that teachers were frustrated at the assumptions of policymakers when it comes to the implementation process, that is, at the way the policy was to be implemented without any consideration to context. The environment under which the policy unfolded was constrained in terms of allowing teachers to engage in constructive discussions about DAS policy and it left them with feelings of despondency.

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In the case of Madipuo, unlike Selbie and Zolile, she had not had the opportunity to attend a workshop conducted by the NWDE. Her exposure, in preparation for DAS was at school level through meetings and discussions with the principal and DAS coordinator. She commented as follows with regard to preparation for appraisal:

I have not attended any workshop by the Department of Education. I also remember that I never attended any training workshops for OBE. But I am willing to learn because I always ask the principal and he is helpful in clarifying some things (Ret:Mad.3).

The findings above indicated that a supportive environment was important for preparing teachers for appraisal. The work context of the teachers was limited in terms of providing opportunities for learning. Although teachers at Retlafihla had established a culture of work, it was affected by negative influences internally and externally, that is, the farmer's authority and lack of action (support) from the NWDE. The kind of professional support they give each other in handling their day-to-day problems, promoted some form of collegial relationship, which (if properly handled) can enhance teacher learning in a convert manner. In their case, DAS is not seen as having presented them with opportunities for learning.

Finally, preparation for appraisal also involved the setting up of School Development Plans (SDPs) and School Development Teams (SDTs) as outlined under policy context in chapter one (section 1.2). This was simply at the level of knowing that appraisal was accommodated and timetabled for within the school plan. Therefore, taking into consideration teachers' comments in their respective narratives, teachers rated their preparation for appraisal from fair to poor. A critical examination of their responses showed that workshops had offered teachers little in terms of introspective quality that was required by this policy aimed at teacher development. The present system and programmes for training (that follow the cascade model) are not adequate in promoting teacher learning. For example, this approach trains two or three teachers from each school on a limited basis with the hope that they would be in a position to train other teachers in their respective schools. All teachers raised the duration of the workshops as a concern.

Findings also showed that actual practice of teachers and opportunities for teacher learning are largely influenced by the context of the schools in which they work. Thus environmental atmosphere that includes negative pressures and conflicts had an adverse effect on teacher learning. Teachers need professional development that is linked to context and can provide opportunities for development and ultimately prepare them for appraisal. DAS has not effectively promoted or enhanced teacher learning because of the inadequate attention given to training support and varying resource contexts under which the policy was implemented. Teacher learning occurred on a minimal level.

5.5.2 Self Appraisal

Through self-appraisal, teachers were expected to describe, share and reflect on significant events in the implementation of DAS policy, which had a lasting impact on their development. Using the process of self-appraisal they had to explore their DAS experiences and describe both positive and negative experiences about DAS. Thus, the process encouraged teachers to identify not only strengths, but also interests and weaknesses within their own context. During self-appraisal teachers would therefore gather information to be used in making decisions about the quality of their performance.

Self-appraisal as a stage in the process of the developmental appraisal system was expected to assist teachers in clarifying areas in which specific help is required. The process is both individual and collaborative in that it enables teachers to reflect on their own learning and development, and what informs it while at the same time presenting opportunities for shared discussions and feedback. It represents a change from the inspection system because teachers are able to address their areas of need. Thus, self-appraisal permits the teacher to carry out an activity for professional growth, possibly with another colleague serving as a resource within the school.

This implies that although teachers had to go through self-appraisal, they were expected to do so in a climate of collaborating with colleagues for sharing ideas and experiences on DAS, which would assist them to reflect constantly on their learning and professional development.

Teachers' understanding of the process of self-appraisal was explored. They were also asked whether they had received any training for the process of self-appraisal, length of training as well as the nature of the training. I also explored their responses further to find out if the process had changed their practice, contributed to their development and specifically what they have learnt as a result of the self-appraisal process.

Findings varied quite substantially from the DAS coordinators to other teacher cases who participated in the implementation of DAS. Most teachers had a fairly good understanding of what self-appraisal is all about. Teachers understood it to mean reflecting on what they do for purposes of their development. It was also seen as a reflection of how they behave and feel about their experiences. However, some teachers demonstrated a lack of understanding of the process. This implied that teachers' understanding of the process showed that some learning did occur as a result of knowledge acquired.

The three DAS coordinators from the three schools have been exposed to similar training for the process of self-appraisal, during the training workshops by the NDWE they had attended in preparation for DAS. They indicated that they were briefed about the process of self-appraisal and they were given activities to do practically during training. Thereafter, within the groups, they were able to reflect on the whole process. The briefing and the practical aspect lasted approximately 45 minutes plus 10 minutes for reflection in the groups. They all indicated that they had not experienced any difficulties. But surprisingly enough, Peter and Ruby revealed that they had not benefited in terms of their development, because they said "*it was not anything new and had not affected them in any way.*" Selbie's response showed that she had a problem in abstracting issues from everyday practice and linking them to DAS experiences.

It did nothing for me. If you come from a school like mine you are always worried about your learners, and you do the best in the circumstances. So, developing and learning from DAS does not come into the picture (Ret:S.HOD⁵.4).

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In her case, she does not see DAS as having had any effect on her learning and development especially through the self-appraisal process. School context does emerge throughout as a limiting factor for opening up opportunities for development as well as change in attitude. Basically she had misgivings about the applicability and effect of DAS in influencing her development. For the three coordinators it can be inferred that teacher learning did not occur because of the attitudes and sceptical perspective demonstrated by the teachers. Given their negative perspective, teachers did not open themselves up for learning through DAS.

In contrast, Peter's narration gave a positive view about his experience in the self-appraisal process. He commented as follows:

There were a few of the criteria that I felt needed attention. These made me take a good look at myself and caused me to evaluate my performance in those areas. I immediately determined in my mind that I needed to effect some changes in those areas. I consciously worked on developing and refining some of my personal skills and this gave me an idea of what is expected of me (JE:D.Pri.6).

Peter's response demonstrated a fairly good understanding of the process of self-appraisal, because he gave instances of how he went about the reflective process, which is an indication that learning could have occurred as a result of reflective process. He showed how he engaged in self-analysis or self-exploration for his development, and he adopted a systematic approach in consciously determining areas of need.

Interestingly, although Ruby responded positively on her understanding of self-appraisal, that is, she saw it as a process that enabled her to assess or evaluate herself, checking if she was doing her job well, she expressed the view that she had not benefited from the process. The reason as she pointed out in her diary was "*it was more of a routine for me*".

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Zolile, in his capacity as principal, attended workshops that exposed him to training on self-appraisal process. His response showed that he felt uncertain about the process and its effect on his learning and growth professionally. He expressed his feelings as follows:

I find it difficult to link all the activities I went through during workshops with my school and myself. I don't see how this develops me (Ret: Pri.4).

An examination of his response revealed shortcomings in the actual internalization of the process. This is largely due to the problem of the school environment. What they experience working in an environment that is isolated with no support has proved to be counter productive for promoting and enhancing teacher learning. Furthermore, for Madipuo, no formal training on self-appraisal was available because she never attended any workshops by the NWDE. When information about DAS policy was cascaded, emphasis was rather on explaining policy intentions and appraisal by panel members. She viewed self-appraisal only within the context of DAS when she commented as follows:

I did not engage in self-appraisal, because I was not trained on self-appraisal (Ret: Mad.4).

The above response demonstrated that she was bemused by the process because it was not addressed as a professional skill during meetings at school level. In addition, she did not learn because of lack of training, which did not present opportunities for professional growth.

Molapo, Elsie, Lydia and Tonderai indicated that although they had not received any formal training for self-appraisal, the process adopted by their school for visits by the principal had actually exposed them to the process of evaluating themselves. They were encouraged to review the way they teach, problems they encounter and thus improve themselves. Tonderai responded as follows on his own experience:

At some stage one needs to reflect on his/her work and get an independent professional assessment that aims at developing rather than the one that just checks up on you. Further training on self-appraisal will be useful because it will strengthen what I am

already doing (JE:T.3).

The comments by Tonderai revealed that he saw positive benefits as a result of self-appraisal. He also supports the view that continuous training would be essential in ensuring teacher development.

Maggy and Desiree had also received formal training on the self-appraisal process, whereas Omega had not. But they all indicated that more information was acquired when they discussed and read other documents to get clarification. Desiree pointed out that being aware of the different stages of appraisal made her to prepare thoroughly.

What they also revealed was the fact that the workshops conducted at school level emphasized and focused on preparation for appraisal by panel members, and not on the process. This was a confirmation of the concern raised by other teachers who shared similar experiences, namely, lack of exposure to all the stages in the appraisal process.

In her response, Desiree touched on one of the main aspects of self-appraisal, viz. identifying areas of need. In addition she also revealed an understanding of the process as involving introspection through the following comment:

It sort of made me to introspect myself as to what I really want or what I need to be appraised on (Bar.D.HOD³.3).

On the other hand, Omega's lack of training in the process is revealed in her lack of knowledge about self-appraisal. She raised the following comments:

I was not trained on self-appraisal. If we were provided with this opportunity, maybe things would be different. For me, the stress of dealing with OBE and other policies doe not allow me to do self-appraisal (Bar:O.HOD⁴.4).

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A closer examination of Omega's response revealed one of the pertinent issues that had affected all teachers in the study, that is, policy overload and in particular the OBE problem which seemed to have impacted negatively on teacher attitudes and opportunities for growth, largely due to inadequate training and lack of resources. As she further indicated, these concerns did not allow her and other teachers the opportunity to address more constructively processes such as self-appraisal.

On the whole, teachers found appraisal in general a problematic issue and self-appraisal appeared to have had dubious credibility for some teachers. This was due largely to the fact that teachers were not honest in their own assessment, and thus not willing to acknowledge their weaknesses (areas where they need assistance). This is supported by Ruby who expressed her concern as follows:

Teachers are awarding themselves "A" grade, which is not in accordance with their real performance. They are doing all this because they want to be seen as achieving (Bar:R.HOD².5).

Ruby raised an important concern about lack of honesty that seemed to characterize self-appraisal. If teachers are not willing to acknowledge their professional weaknesses or to admit that they have problems, it is unlikely that they will be in a position to take control of their own development. Given the varied responses from teachers, it is evident that teacher learning did not occur for most teachers as a result of lack of training. Although for some, opportunities at school level could have paved the way for learning, the general negative attitudes and lack of resources influenced teachers negatively.

Therefore, when it comes to self-appraisal, it is important for teachers to gain critical distance on their own professional development in the various resource contexts. If honestly implemented, self-appraisal can inform the teaching process and the teachers' own development.

5.5.3 Peer Appraisal

Peer appraisal as a stage in the developmental appraisal system is viewed as a situation in which a colleague (by arrangement) would observe a teacher presenting a lesson. This process calls for constructive feedback in a non-judgemental manner to assist the teacher professionally. A formal cycle is followed, that is, observation and post observation. During observation, the appraiser, who takes notes to be shared later where a genuine discussion is expected to take place, gathers information. Peer appraisal is thus a developmental process for the one teaching and the colleague observing, and is used as part of a systematic plan for professional growth and development, which does present opportunities for teacher learning.

Teachers were asked to indicate what peer appraisal meant to them, the kind of preparation they received for the process of peer appraisal, and how the process influenced their work. They were expected to explain how the process had influenced their classroom practice and contributed towards their professional development. They also had to discuss the problems they had experienced and what they had learnt as a result of peer appraisal.

Findings showed that all teachers in the study had a good understanding of what peer appraisal meant, namely, a process where you are assessed by a colleague teaching the same learning area, to help in giving advice for improvement and to address a teacher's strengths and weaknesses. They also see it as a process that involves one teacher in the school requesting even a senior teacher not necessarily teaching the same learning area to observe him/her teaching, and providing criticism that would help that teacher to grow professionally. Other explanations linked peer appraisal to the process of team teaching.

Ruby's response was in line with the general understanding demonstrated by other teachers. She expressed her understanding of peer appraisal as follows:

One educator assessing the other to help identify weak points and guide as to how to improve. There is agreement on time, date to be appraised and the core criteria to be appraised (Bar:R.HOD².6).

What is rather limiting about her understanding is that she narrowly focuses on identifying weak points. This is just one of the aspects that can be addressed, since the process is regarded as inclusive, covering strengths, weaknesses, concerns and challenges.

With the exception of Peter, Ruby, Zolile, Desiree and Omega, findings also showed that not all teachers had received any training on peer appraisal as part of the developmental appraisal system. In addition, they had not been appraised by their peers. Their only exposure to peer appraisal was during appraisal by panel members. These findings showed that teacher learning did not occur because teachers were not trained on the process.

Lydia was very vocal about her feelings towards the process, and she responded as follows:

There was nothing of that nature, everything depended upon myself. Teachers were not serious about the whole process. It was during the time of redeployment and most teachers were demotivated. So, you can see that for me, nothing changed (JE:L.3).

In addition to the obvious lack of training and opportunity to be appraised by their peers, teachers expressed negative attitudes towards the process. For example, at John Edwards, teachers viewed peer appraisal as a process that would disrupt classes. They also raised the argument that since panel appraisal included their peer, it would be a duplication of activities to implement the process as indicated.

Appraisal by peer also caused uncomfortable feelings and apprehension. Normally teachers regarded a peer as an advantage and valuable resource, but not everybody perceived it in that manner and thus did not welcome it. Teachers expressed the view that they felt intimidated by someone (one of their own) who was now in authority as the one appraising. Although the peer would make constructive comments, the formality of the process was seen as intimidating.

Omega expressed her discomfort about the process through the following comments:

Having someone in your class to observe you is very intimidating. Teaching and learning becomes tense, you are too self-conscious no matter what anybody says. The thing is we differ in the way we see things. I don't see it working (Bar:O.HOD⁴.5).

The other weakness revealed by teachers concerned the fact that other teachers chose their friends who did not give honest feedback because they did not want to hurt their friends' feelings. This defeated the purpose of using the process to promote professional development.

Given the teachers' views, and the fact that the peer appraisal stage was not implemented, it is evident that it affected teachers' development negatively as they were not presented with opportunities for learning through this DAS process. For teachers like Selbie, Zolile and Madipuo, the school context did not make it possible for them to implement it. They also shared the same sentiments with teachers from John Edwards who viewed peer appraisal as disruptive and a duplication of activities as it was already part of panel appraisal. In the case of Ruby, Maggy, Desiree and Omega, indications are that workload also influenced their learning and non-implementation of this specific stage.

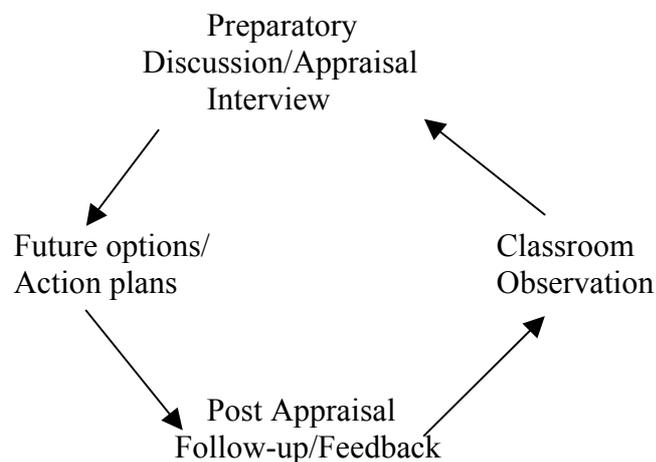
5.5.4 Appraisal by Panel Members

This stage of the developmental appraisal process involves distinct aspects such as preparatory discussion or appraisal interview focusing on information gathering and preparatory activities. These include, among others, clarifying the purpose of the appraisal by a panel and agreeing on the criteria for the appraisal, which helps to focus the appraisal on pre-determined aspects, and avoids vagueness. These activities can be viewed as developmental if a truly effective interview takes place. Secondly, classroom observation, which takes place on the agreed date, should be seen as supportive, and non-threatening. Lastly, follow up or post appraisal with feedback would be given in a non-judgemental way.

The teacher and the panel are expected to work in a collaborative way to address behaviour or actions observed during the observation session. The process offers opportunities to discuss future options, action plans and follow-ups. What is valuable is instant feedback communicated in a reassuring manner (See Figure 6).

Although DAS policy stresses the non-judgemental approach, the process requires that judgements be made about teaching effectiveness and developmental needs. These are made by the panel members, but what is important is that feedback to the teacher needs to be constructive and focused.

Figure 6: An Illustration of Key Aspects in Panel Appraisal



In this inquiry, teachers were asked to explain what the process meant to them and indicate any training received in preparation for appraisal by panel members. They were expected to describe the nature of the training, support and their usefulness in preparing them for appraisal by panel.

Teachers demonstrated a good understanding of what appraisal by panel members meant. For example, Ruby gave her understanding as follows:

It is a process where the appraisee, teacher, agrees with members whom she feels will help to empower her in identifying strengths, weaknesses or areas of need. The identification of these aspects takes place during classroom observation and constructive feedback is then given by the panel afterwards (Bar:R.HOD².7).

With reference to training received from the NWDE, in preparation for appraisal by panel members, only Peter, Ruby, Zolile, Desiree and Omega indicated that they had been exposed to such training, which they viewed as fruitful and which can be seen as having influenced their learning. The other seven teacher cases had not received training from the NWDE. What these teachers revealed was that the process was only explained to them during meetings at school level. In addition, when SDPs and SDTs were set up by the schools, discussions also touched on the importance of appraisal by panel members. Given these findings, it is evident that the majority of the teachers approached the process with little exposure and no training, which affected their learning and professional development in a negative way.

Furthermore, teachers were asked to explain what happened during the process. They were also expected to explain how they felt during the period following the appraisal, waiting for the formal report. They had to express their views with regard to the issues raised by panel members and how the comments from the panel affected their development as teachers and finally what they learnt as a result of appraisal by panel.

Teachers presented similar accounts of what happened during the appraisal by panel members. They indicated that a panel consisting of a peer, principal/deputy, external member and a union member sit in the class to observe them teach. The panel also looks at their record files, check learners' books, and the general classroom appearance. During the lesson presentation they check on a teacher's knowledge of content, teaching strategies, different skills, use of relevant instructional media, learners' participation and actual involvement in the various activities presented, the teacher's language use, the teacher's responsiveness to learners' questions, the teacher's level of nervousness as well as general confidence and general classroom management.

With specific focus on the process of classroom observation, teachers gave different accounts based on their individual experiences, which were influenced by the work context. Findings also showed that teachers' accounts were both positive and negative because of the factors at play that evoked this mix of feelings and perspectives.

Peter's narration largely reflected positive experiences as a panel member because of his position as a deputy principal, DAS coordinator and chairperson of the School Development Team. In his comments, he revealed that he had benefited as a member of the panel where he gained understanding not only about his role, but also from the teacher's position. He responded as follows:

As part of the panel for various educators I gained a lot of insight in the different phases present, Pre-school, Foundation and Intermediate¹⁵. It also made me develop a picture of what these educators are capable of and where they could be developed, after these experiences I had a greater appreciation for the work that our educators are doing. I also had a broadened understanding of the role that I needed to play (JE:D.Pri.7).

It can be inferred from his comments that he was presented with opportunities for learning and development from two different positions, which enabled him to gain a deeper understanding of the process. Through his role and participation in the process, he was able to change his perception about the work of other teachers. On the whole he gained not only contextual understanding, but also new insights and compassionate judgement of other teachers, and all these issues informed his professional learning.

Peter also shared his experience as an appraisee, which was also positive. He indicated that from this position, he viewed the panel appraisal as worthwhile because the panel members were very professional throughout the process. He revealed his experience as follows:

I felt reassured about myself as an educator because I feel that others' opinion of us is a true reflection of who and what we are. I have learnt that self-confidence is the key to being successful in everything that we do, and that a positive approach to change goes a long way in assisting one to cope with the challenges that changes bring (JE:D.Pri).

¹⁵ Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) and Intermediate Phase(Grades 4-6):
These were formerly known as the Primary School Level.

Subjecting Peter's comments to a critical assessment revealed that the panel appraisal reinforced his beliefs about his capabilities and identity as a teacher and helped to boost his confidence. He viewed these aspects as having assisted him to cope with the challenges of implementation as a result of change. What Peter shared, supports the view that teacher development and learning are linked to a teacher's identity and should therefore be seen as personal processes.

Despite the above positive experiences he shared, he was still sceptical about real change and development as a result of the policy. Peter expressed negative feelings following the appraisal by panel members and he commented as follows:

I was still left with feelings of negativity as to the effectiveness of DAS system, and wondered if it would reflect reality or just cause window dressing. This left me with a feeling that the process had not served its purpose and some of the panel members were not honest enough. So, I feel that a lot of time and effort have been wasted on a fruitless project. For me, as an educator, I know that I will always have areas that need development because we do not all have the same strengths and weaknesses (JE:D.Pri.).

Peter's comments revealed a very informed critical perspective where similar concerns were earlier raised by other teachers. For instance, his first statement challenges the assumptions about the intentions of DAS throughout the implementation stage. This kind of critical perspective can be seen as having influenced the extent to which he is likely to learn from DAS, in a negative way. Although his earlier comments revealed that he was presented with opportunities for learning, it can be inferred that learning did not occur as expected. Most teachers also shared the same sentiments about the policy, viewing it as: "just a window dressing exercise." What compounded his negative perception was the lack of honesty by other panel members, thus rendering the process a fruitless exercise. The actions by other members are clearly a contradiction of the expectations of the process as clearly set out at the beginning of this section, that is, a process that involves giving genuine and constructive feedback.

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Ruby stressed the importance of her participation as an appraisee during the process, and acknowledged that her positive view was influenced by what she saw as benefits as a result of that exposure. She explains her experience as follows:

What I like about the process is that you are able to identify your strengths and weaknesses. It operates like a mirror because it gives your true reflection whether you are hard working or not. After appraisal I saw that it is important for the educator to prepare for the lesson. This makes learning interesting because your subject becomes broader since the information is galore (Bar:R.HOD²).

Ruby's comments addressed one of the goals of DAS policy, i.e., teacher improvement with a focus on areas of needs. She viewed it as a process that allows for reflection, where she mentioned that: "it operated like a mirror". This is an important aspect to raise because all stages of the developmental appraisal policy should present teachers with opportunities for reflection, which informs professional growth.

Furthermore, she also revealed some of her concerns, which she noted in her diary. Her misgivings about the process question the credibility of choosing the panel as well as the kind of feedback received. These concerns also showed scepticism about the usefulness of these aspects in contributing towards teacher learning and professional development. Her negative experiences are expressed as follows:

What I discredited on DAS is the criteria of choosing a panel. One will obviously choose friends for the panel, so you will wonder if the process will be fair and developing. My friends won't like to criticize me and they do things just to get the job done. What even surprised me is that I was given advice to improve my personality and to participate in sports activities. The event had a negative impact on me because the results did not give the true reflection of me. I expected to be told about my teaching. I felt it was not a fair deal, because even if it is not a friendship thing, there are four people in a panel who all view things differently (R.HOD²).

The above concerns raised by Rudy are in support of what was identified as a problem even during the process of peer appraisal. Her comments also suggested that the negative experience during this process is not likely to improve her classroom practice and therefore not enhance learning as a result of the feedback she received which was

not constructive. What I view as problematic with the panel appraisal taking into account Peter's and Ruby's negative perspectives and experiences is the fact that the panels' authority is insufficient to encourage and advise teachers to examine their professional skills given the way the panels are put together.

For the other teacher cases, appraisal by panel members evoked mixed emotions. For example, although some teachers expressed positive aspects about the process, they indicated that feedback received and lack of adequate time spent with them by the panel gave the process, negative perspective. This also gave weight to comments raised by the two DAS coordinators about how genuine teacher learning and professional development can be realized.

In addition, teachers viewed the process with discomfort and dissatisfaction because of the changes it brought to the classroom environment, that is, the presence of the panel affected learners who concentrated on them and not on the teaching-learning process. Teachers on the other hand felt nervous and unsettled by their presence.

Apprehension is to be expected even though constructive feedback may be given because the formality of the pre-arranged classroom observation sessions unintentionally tended to impose constraints on the classroom environment. Again, if panel appraisal is seen as threatening, it will not lead to teachers opening up to learning through the process. Apart from the two DAS coordinators, findings showed that three teacher cases expressed positive benefits from the process, whereas two teacher cases revealed a mix of both positive and negative experiences. Finally, five teacher cases only shared negative experiences.

Molapo shared his positive benefits of appraisal by panel members when he commented as follows:

This was my first time being appraised or evaluated. I personally learned a lot from the system. I believe in everything you do, especially if it involves young and sensitive minds like the minds of the learners, there should be evaluation or rather positive criticism to build you up. All comments were positive and one of the comments was that I gave a lot of information within one period, of which I felt it was true. I should have divided the information to cater at

least three or four periods within the cycle (JE:Mol.4) .

The above comments revealed that the process provided Molapo who is a relatively new teacher with the opportunity to examine his teaching approaches from a more reflective perspective, which he recognized and acknowledged as true. Although in his first statement he pointed out that he had learned a lot from the system, the rest of his comments do not clearly show what kind of learning had taken place.

With Tonderai, although apprehensive at first, he also viewed the experience as having had a positive influence on his teaching methods and classroom management. Through the diary and critical incident report, he shared his experience as follows:

I have never been frightened like I was the day I was told by our management the date of my appraisal. I knew the date a week before, I never thought of anything that period except that day. I felt like taking leave for that week but remembered that even if I take leave I will come back and they will wait until I come back because it was for every teacher at school. It wasn't a nice week for me, but I just decided to let rest and decide on my panel because they gave us chance to choose our panelists. I chose my panel confidently and told myself that if I make mistake they are there to correct me and not to criticize me. I had a happy ending because I had self-esteem.

After being appraised, I had a lot of things to change in my method of teaching like introducing a new lesson to learners, classroom management and the right way of using chalkboard. Before I taught in my own way not realizing that other children are slow learners, they need my own supervision and encouragement to understand what I am trying to put in their minds. The panelists gave me advice on how to do and I saw progress a month after. Appraisal taught me that things don't always go your own way. Learners were nervous and they gave wrong responses. It was as if they were not listening to me but rather watching the panelists. I had to change how I asked questions using different strategies. I learned to keep my presentations open to changes should the need arise. I felt disappointed in my learners and I felt incompetent. But I had the ability to adapt to any change irrespective of what it cost. I also saw the usefulness of my previous experience, which helped me to cope with the situation, so I used it to build a positive approach towards DAS. I also got fresh ideas or opinions or new way of doing things (JE:T.4) .

Tonderai's comments show that this kind of experience contributed towards his learning in terms of changing teaching methods, recognition and acknowledgement of diversity in learners. What he also revealed was the fact that self-esteem was essential in enabling him to reflect on appraisal that was also held by Peter. Sharing this kind of exposure is one way of learning and growing professionally.

Desiree's response also demonstrated that she had gone through a positive experience, although she felt that the panel did not offer any suggestions in their feedback on how she could overcome her weak points. This attests to a point that was raised earlier on the competence and skills of the panel. She revealed the following about her exposure to the process:

I really enjoyed my experience during implementation of appraisal system. As one of the oldest teachers I found the system more positive than before, because after the lesson the panel of DAS team came together to show me the positive and the weak points they picked up from my presentation and my lesson etc. The only point I feel the team didn't follow up is to help me to overcome the weak points they have picked up from my presentation. They promised to do workshops and to do the DAS every term but up to now we only had one appraisal by a panel. I think with regular implementation the teachers can work hard to develop themselves. But the principal and HODs only do DAS when the Department checks on them. If the school management can follow up DAS positively, it can bear the good fruit for both teacher and learner, as a result the whole education system can achieve the good results. (Bar:D.HOD^{3.4}).

Although the identification of either strengths or weaknesses would assist the reorganization of priorities for professional development, teachers should understand that identifying areas for development does not imply that they will be addressed immediately. However, all would be lost if care is not taken to follow up on the identified areas of need altogether.

In addition to being an appraisee, Desiree had the opportunity to appraise other teachers as a member of the panel. She revealed that both experiences presented her with opportunities for development and learning. She commented as follows:

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I also enjoyed myself as a member of panel team in one of the classes; I learnt how other teachers present themselves. I compared myself to them and checked my weak points, and helped others where necessary. But I liked it because everything was positively presented (Bar:D.HOD³).

On the contrary, Maggy's account showed that she had not learned, as she had not benefited professionally from appraisal by panel members. Interestingly, she expressed a concern almost similar to what Desiree revealed, that is, the inability of the panel to identify any weaknesses. She commented as follows:

I know for a fact that even though I am regarded as a good educator that I do have certain flaws and I felt that the flaws would be highlighted. Unfortunately my appraisal was seen as good and the only thing recommended by the panel was for me to be given more leadership responsibilities. I didn't learn from this experience and I haven't grown as a teacher. Learners are not used to having people in the class and this affects the way they respond. There would have been turning points if my weak points were highlighted. I had no challenges and because of this I learnt nothing (Bar:Mag.4).

The narrow perception held by Maggy on what constitutes professional development and teacher learning is problematic because it does not allow her to see the process beyond what she perceives. Her narrative account brings to the fore the issue of the extent to which DAS really contributes towards a teacher's development. What is also problematic is basically the kind of feedback she received, which was not very constructive. The feedback did not provide meaningful information to guide her professionally and to promote learning.

Omega's account was a mix of both positive and negative experiences. In the first place, she revealed concern about the artificial and changed classroom environment that affected not only her learners but also herself. Because of this, she reported that she tried very hard to impress the panel and she even felt tempted to channel her learners to give correct answers because she was embarrassed by their wrong answers. Under normal circumstances, these would not have been seen as problematic as they are part and parcel of the teaching-learning situation. Her experience was demonstrated as follows:

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Most of the things they said were correct, but I said to them they should come to my class unannounced so that they can help me address things I should work on. I was happy with their comments. A lovely panel I had! I did not want to give myself A's. The panel and I discussed some things, but isn't this window dressing, I asked myself. I wanted something real, but why did I prepare for such a long time just to impress the panel for an hour. DAS is a learning experience anyway. Things a person did/does not know about themselves come up and working on them is important for self-improvement (Bar:O.HOD⁴.6).

The above comments support the negative perceptions that were presented by Peter and Ruby, that is, scepticism about the realizations of the policy's intentions aimed at teacher development. Despite the negative feelings she was still able to credit the process with having presented her with the opportunity to examine her own teaching for self-improvement, but this does not necessarily imply that learning took place, because of the scepticism that may have prevented them from learning as a result of DAS experiences.

Interestingly, she also seemed to be at odds with her own identity as a teacher and as a person, which could have influence on the way she learns, in a negative way. She commented as follows:

I laughed when it was mentioned that I wasn't relaxed for that hour, I thought I was. Then I cannot say I know myself very well. When I thought I was shining, I was not relaxed. I was too much prepared maybe that's why I thought everything was okay. I learnt about the way people see me, as a good teacher who can improve. I worked on really using all the challenges to develop myself. One never knows what people say about them until they sit and talk. Those panel members were positive and honest, I wanted and needed that. I was happy that I was appraised because now I feel I have learnt some new ways. I was not relaxed before the feedback session, I wanted them to do it and get it over and done with (Bar:O.HOD⁴.7).

The narrative account presented by Elsie also shows that she had not benefited or changed as a result of her exposure to the appraisal by panel members. She revealed the following in her response:

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The DAS system never really changed or influenced my lessons. My own experience at school as a learner influences my teaching as well as the wonderful lecturers I had at university. I do not think that anything changed afterwards. The lesson, which was prepared, went off well. Because I am a qualified high school teacher my knowledge on the social science field is substantial. I also constantly try to improve my lessons. Every class is different and every year the learners are different, the lesson therefore has to change to meet the needs of the learners (JE:E.HOD¹.4).

Elsie presented a very informed response on what influenced and contributed to her learning and development as a teacher, namely, her formal school experiences as a learner and as a student at university. This information showed that teacher learning and professional development are not only influenced by factors inside the school and classroom where the teacher works, but also by other factors such as teacher's previous knowledge and experience. In addition, she also indicates that her ability to engage in self-review and the subject knowledge she already has, caused her to change her classroom practice. On the whole, she had not learned nor changed professionally as a result of DAS. She concluded by saying:

To be truly honest, I feel that the DAS system did not work for me (E.HOD¹).

Lydia's case is a good example of some of the major flaws and weaknesses concerning the effective implementation of DAS policy in schools. She expressed the following about her experience:

The panel just came and observed me in class. There was no review done because some of the members had to go somewhere. They arranged that I will receive feedback later, but the time never came. DAS was stopped because we were now waiting for the new IQMS. (JE:L.4).

Lydia's comments clearly showed that she had not benefited from appraisal by panel members due to lack of feedback and this prevented her from learning as a result of this negative experience.

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Selbie did not provide input regarding this process. This was probably due to her earlier accounts where she expressed negative feelings about DAS and the fact that it had not been implemented in her school. She responded as follows:

Panel appraisal has not taken place, but I feel it will not make any difference, as panels are not honest as you would expect. DAS cannot meet my expectations, so, I learned nothing new. If the situation was different, I think I can still learn (Ret:S.HOD⁵.5).

Zolile and Madipuo presented similar views as a result of their school situation. They had not been appraised because of the uniqueness of their situation. Working in a farm school, they needed to liaise with another neighbouring farm school to set up an SDT and panel for appraisal. In ill-resourced farm schools this was a challenge with no immediate solution at hand. If teachers had to be on a panel for another school, two problems often arose, viz., transport (to travel the distance) and the fact that learners would be without teachers because farm schools are still affected by an acute shortage of teachers.

Given the findings on the process, it would seem that panel appraisal, although viewed as a valuable means of promoting teacher development if the distinct aspects are implemented effectively, did not present teachers with genuine opportunities for learning. The way DAS was implemented had a negative effect on teacher learning. For example, the tension between school context and training affected teachers' opportunities to learn from the experiences. In addition, the cumbersome procedures of the many criteria for appraisal and choice of panel members impacted negatively on learning and professional growth. In the case of John Edwards and Bareng where leadership played a meaningful role towards encouraging teacher learning, inadequate training affected not only the collaborative environment but also teacher attitudes, which were important in this inquiry. Retlafihla cases were largely affected by the negative school context that prevented them from learning through DAS policy.

5.5.4.1 Challenges and their Effects on Teacher Learning and Professional Development

A critical examination of the process (appraisal by panel) raised several challenges teachers were confronted with and had to address during implementation. These challenges affected teacher learning both positively and negatively. Adding to the challenges was the fact that the three schools participating in this research inquiry implemented the process differently. Although it is important to recognize that no policy can be implemented uniformly, due to situational and contextual issues, efforts should be made to ensure effective implementation. This was not only unique to these schools, but it was a problem that affected most of the schools. The view here was confirmed by the QACD in the North West Province.

For example, with the choice of panel members, although guidelines were set, these were either ignored or applied differently. The panel had to be comprised of four members, that is, peer in the same subject, union representative, principal/deputy principal/HOD, outside expert (subject advisor, educators from other institutions, district/circuit manager, university lecturer). Getting outside support to sit on the panel, never materialised given the problems involved.

The discussions I held with DAS coordinators and principals indicated that the composition of the panel members differed amongst teachers in the same school, some of whom insisted on choosing their friends not necessarily in the same subject. The choice of union representatives became a contentious issue as teachers went out of their way to select a person of their own preference. Thus, the formation of the panels was open to abuse and the principals were powerless to stop it for fear of retribution from the unions.

In the case of Retlafihla Primary School, the process was not implemented as explained earlier on in the chapter. The scenario as presented, undermined efforts aimed at ensuring that the process presented teachers with opportunities for learning and professional growth. The following is a summary of some of the challenges experienced by teachers:

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- The greatest challenge was getting teachers to accept that they had to be appraised and accept it in good faith. This was largely due to the fact that most teachers perceived it in the same way as inspection, or as a fault-finding process. These views had an effect on teacher attitudes, which are important for promoting teacher learning and ensuring effective implementation.
- For most teachers, the process was not properly introduced due to lack of training. Teachers felt apprehensive about being unfairly judged which affected them negatively. As discussed earlier on, this impacted negatively on teachers to open up for learning.
- The process was largely viewed as a fruitless project and a window dressing activity because of the following reasons:
 - (i) Lack of honesty and specialized subject knowledge by panel members. Feedback and discussions were not useful in assisting teachers to determine and suggest areas for development. On the other hand, feedback validated things teachers knew about themselves without giving additional advice on further improvement on their strengths.
 - (ii) Insufficient time for meetings and discussions to present feedback as some members of the panel were either involved in other panels, or had commitments elsewhere. This issue challenges the need for such a process if effective teacher professional growth is not given serious consideration.
 - (iii) Special efforts by teachers to prepare just for the appraisal, which meant that “lazy teachers” were thus seen as good in just one observation session. Therefore, the outcome of the appraisal was questionable, as the focus on development was lost.
- Policy overload, linked to inadequate training received, emerged as one of the biggest challenges teachers had to deal with. It had a negative

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impact on the kinds of opportunities presented/available for their learning.

- Classroom disruptions were also a concern because the process takes place during teaching time. The well-resourced school was able to deal with the challenge, that is, getting extra help to look after the affected classes. For the moderately resourced school, it remained a challenge they could not resolve; for example, teacher shortage as a result of redeployment policy. The poorly resourced school was not able to implement the process because it would mean the disruption of the entire school.

Although the above issues affected teachers, interestingly, some of them expressed the view that the process had contributed towards their development. For example, teachers referred to results such as change in attitudes, ability to review one's work, recognizing and acknowledging strengths and weaknesses, importance of self-confidence and opportunity to interact with panel members as important for promoting professional growth. What was difficult to establish was the issue of teacher learning, which was not clearly articulated by teachers. This was influenced by the fact that teachers were practising superficial compliance of the policy, but did not engage with it at a deeper level. For instance, comments such as "*I did not learn anything,*" "*DAS did not change me*" emerged throughout the interview sessions, in the critical incident reports and some of the diaries teachers kept. In probing for explanations, Lydia captured the essence of how teachers felt in her comments:

We are still waiting to see how DAS can improve our profession, because we have not reached that stage yet. We can't talk of teacher learning when nothing has happened. We heard that DAS is going, and we will have IQMS, we shall see (JE:L.5).

Finally, a common view held by the teachers was that the policy itself was acceptable, what was problematic was its implementation. They felt that if the appraisal system were properly implemented, it would provide opportunities for learning as well as empower teachers professionally.

Section Three

5.6 What do the Cases Reveal about Teacher Learning?

This section of the chapter brings together key issues that emerged from the study. This is also an important attempt to summarize key findings from sections one and two of the chapter. In subjecting the twelve teacher cases to a cross-case synthesis, it became evident that teachers have experienced the effects of DAS policy differently. Teachers' experiences in terms of professional development and learning are different even though they may be from the same school and had attended the same workshops. What affects the outcome of teacher appraisal are experiences, attitudes, other characteristics and the fact that learning is a personal matter. On the whole, findings on the teacher cases presented disparate and to some extent fragmented patterns of teachers' experiences, and the least cause for enthusiasm about DAS.

The contextual factors and background history of their schools also played a key role, which had a negative or positive effect. This is evident with the three teachers (Selbie, Zolile and Madipuo) from Retlafitlha Primary School, with the worst case of teacher shortage, very little resources, and where the authority of the farmer is above that of the principal. Failure by the provincial department to intervene is an indication of the lack of commitment, support and capacity to promote the process of teacher learning and professional development. Retlafitlha is a good example of what is termed the "*hands off*" approach and casual attitude, which did not present teachers with opportunities for learning.

Furthermore, Selbie, Zolile and Madipuo did not see the value of DAS policy in as far as learning and development were concerned, due to the fact that the policy was not properly implemented in their school. The teachers showed a disconnection between reform agenda through DAS and professional development. The principal could not play any meaningful role in enhancing learning as a result of the contextual factors that stood in the way of significant learning and professional growth. For instance, their work context was characterized by constraints, rather than opportunities for learning and development. In addition, the teachers carried out their work almost entirely out of contact with colleagues, and little time for informal talks.

If we support the view that professional development and teacher learning should be embedded in practice, looking at these three teachers' situation, it can be inferred that very little learning took place through interaction with colleagues and learners. The learning was a result of knowledge situated in practice (although minimal). Secondly, knowledge acquired through DAS workshops that Zolile and Selbie attended could have contributed to their learning. The problem is that these teachers did not view it as essential for their professional development, hence the assertion that they had learned nothing from the workshop.

Ironically, Zolile reported that the workshops contributed towards changing his attitude. Learning could have taken place through this change in perception, but the problem is that this is difficult to determine. Lastly, whenever the issue of teacher learning was discussed, teachers (except Madipuo) described their learning in the context of acquiring additional qualifications. This emerged as a common issue. Throughout the interview sessions and follow-ups with the three teachers, the issue of work context was always raised in the discussions. This showed that DAS policy could not successfully influence teacher learning without supporting them in the different resource contexts.

In addition to the above, the four teachers from Bareng Primary (Ruby, Desiree, Omega and Maggy) and the five from John Edwards (Peter, Elsie, Tonderai, Molapo and Lydia) acknowledged that the school environment played a role in providing opportunities for learning because they were able to interact, share ideas, as well as their concerns about DAS. Therefore, teachers learned by expanding their knowledge through listening and conversing with others. As DAS was implemented with its problems and challenges, teachers also learned what was working and what was not. They sought out more knowledge from other teachers, they adjusted and probably grew professionally. Linked to the school environment was leadership, which supported and influenced teachers to be receptive to the policy. Despite this positive factor (leadership), Desiree, Omega and Maggy indicated that they had neither learned anything nor benefited much professionally from DAS. It is evident that the different resource contexts where teachers worked affected their learning, although it was difficult to clearly explain the relationship due to the fact that each school context was unique and each teacher was also unique (given their profiles in Table 3).

Relationships with colleagues and students are regarded as necessary for professional development and promoting teacher learning. Teacher learning takes place in relationships where the self is formed and strengthened in the context of its relations with others and this is crucial for professional development. Teachers at these schools credited DAS with changes in their attitudes towards appraisal, an observation that Zolile made. Teachers who experienced this positive aspect about DAS indicated that it served as a catalyst for them to learn to examine issues differently, and were able to view DAS from a different perspective and how it could affect them professionally. Although teachers mentioned these positive aspects as a result of change in attitudes, there was no conclusive evidence to suggest that there was learning and professional growth.

The negative attitude towards the policy can be attributed to several factors, but here I chose to focus on inadequate training, which teachers carried over from the implementation of OBE (Curriculum 2005) because it is central to the effective implementation of DAS. Teachers expressed the same dissatisfaction about inadequate training for Curriculum 2005 as well as for DAS. However, Peter and Ruby felt empowered to cope with the implementation process due to the training they had received.

Findings also showed that teachers demonstrated a fair understanding of the policy, its interpretation and the various stages of the DAS policy, where they took away experiences both positive and negative. Teachers manifested ideas from workshops, and school meetings differently and this is reflected in their interpretation and understanding of DAS. Given this explanation, it can be inferred that teachers learned “something” out of these experiences. What is difficult to articulate is the kind of learning that occurred and most important, how useful it was for the teachers’ development. Apart from the fact that teacher learning is a complex process; teachers’ responses gave superficial examinations of their experiences through DAS as indicated earlier on.

Linked to policy understanding and change in attitudes are teachers’ knowledge and experiences. These aspects embrace self-development and improvement. I felt it was important to establish whether teachers’ perceptions about DAS were framed by their

mental and emotional state or influenced by the previous experience on inspection. Some of the teachers acknowledged that their views were shaped by earlier experiences of the inspection system and this prevented them from opening themselves up to acquiring different experiences through DAS. On the other hand, others indicated that DAS helped them to broaden their knowledge and to be more aware of how they teach, without necessarily presenting clear explanations.

Interestingly, Maggy admitted that she was resistant to DAS because it disturbed who she was as *“an experienced good teacher”* who enriched her knowledge through reading and watching television. Thus, she could not make a direct link to her classroom practice. She believed that whatever changes she had acquired were a result of accumulation of past experiences. Peter also expressed a similar view when he said: *“my teaching experience made me who I am and the fact that I like to read”*.

Selbie’s case can be attributed to lack of knowledge and in-depth understanding about the policy, which is expressed in her utterances such as: *“Nothing, I gained nothing”*, and *“I did not learn and I cannot develop because I benefited nothing”*. The gaps in knowledge as demonstrated had a negative effect on her learning and development.

Elsie was emphatic when she said: *“the knowledge and experience I have, I acquired during my school years and as a student at university”*. This showed that she did not credit DAS as having influenced her learning and development since the knowledge that she already had could not be linked to DAS. On the whole, teachers interpreted DAS in relation to their experiences and beliefs. Thus, they arrived at different conclusions about the extent to which DAS affected classroom practice and professional development.

Given the different experiences as demonstrated above, it can be inferred that some teachers experienced partial benefits from the implementation of DAS whereas with others evidence showed they had not learned as a result of their exposure to DAS policy.

To understand teachers' professional behaviour, it is important to understand how they see themselves as teachers. This implies that the concepts of self and identity are central for this study. I have used the narrative approach, as narratives are useful tools in the construction of self. Teachers' professional self occupies a key place in their personal interpretative framework. Beliefs about themselves and their self-esteem are relevant for their development and the way they learn. There is a need to also acknowledge that self-concepts are resistant to change. Extracts from the following teachers presented a challenge to the way they explained and perceived themselves in the context of DAS. Molapo stated, *"I believe in everything I do"*. Lydia said, *"I had a happy ending because I had self-esteem"*. Omega's remark, *"Then I cannot say I know myself very well ... I learned about the way people see me"*. Peter indicated, *"It strengthened my self-esteem and the way I always reflect on issues"*. What remains unexplained is the extent to which their identities influenced their learning and professional development in the implementation of DAS.

On the whole, most teachers from the well-resourced and moderately resourced schools demonstrated a positive attitude towards DAS although they were sceptical to a great extent about its effectiveness in realizing its intentions, that is, learning and growing professionally. The narrative accounts showed that teacher learning was rather difficult to address and the conceptual framework also supports the evidence presented. Thus, the process of trying to foster learning through DAS policy was rather ambitious because teacher learning is complex, teachers learn in different ways and the crucial point is that technically, the policy did not begin as well as had been expected it would do. In fact I would say implementation of the policy was just beginning to be addressed. The reform agenda as espoused in DAS policy, did not dispose teachers toward learning and professional development because of the way the implementation was improperly handled.

5.7 Chapter Synthesis

In this chapter, findings on how teachers understand the policy are supported with data generated from their narrative accounts. In presenting the appropriated findings, specific focus was addressed on how teachers understood DAS policy. I also

attempted to determine if there was any link between previous experiences of inspection to how teachers perceive and understood the policy.

In addition, this chapter presented key findings to the main critical research question on what were the effects of developmental appraisal policy on teacher learning as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts. It can be inferred from the evidence presented that teacher development and authentic teacher learning cannot necessarily be traced to initiatives such as DAS. Teacher learning is a complex and personal process influenced by different factors both within and outside the school environment. The problem of policy implementation emerged as an issue for concern especially with reference to the “hands off” approach adopted by government, lack of proper planning and organization and lack of training. Thus the process of policy implementation was characterized by several problems especially within the different resource contexts. What is of importance is how the implementation of DAS policy was handled from government down to the level of the teacher. In this regard, the issue of policy development and implementation whereby the approach to implementation assumed that teachers had the skills and knowledge, and would comply was problematic, because it did not consider the practical realities of the teachers’ work environment that affected teacher learning and development negatively.

CHAPTER SIX

RETHINKING THE POLICY-PRACTICE RELATIONSHIP: THE DAS EXPERIENCE

6.1 Introduction

This inquiry sought to establish the effects of developmental appraisal policy on teacher learning as seen through the eyes of teachers working in different resource contexts. The objective was, moreover, to determine whether DAS policy had any effect on teachers that is, in influencing their professional development, their learning as well as changes in classroom practice. This research tests the assumptions of policymakers that teacher appraisal is a tool for changing teacher professional behaviour, and consequently, the quality of education. By facilitating the personal and professional development of teachers, the implementation of the policy, it was claimed, would help to improve the quality of teaching practices.

Although DAS is an important policy aimed at professional development, its implementation was addressed in a technical-rationalist way, which in turn reflected on how teacher professional development was construed. This rational view did not take into account the complex context within which change takes place. It also did not take into consideration the fact that educational change is not just a technical process of management efficiency, or a cultural one of understanding and involvement. It is a political and paradoxical process as well (Hargreaves, 1998).

Throughout this study I tried to show that the assumptions of policymakers and politicians that change is a rational-technical process in which legislated policy intentions are translated into desired effects, do not reflect reality. This linear approach to policy development and implementation is criticized by Wills (1995:262) who points out that:

Teachers are viewed as technicians, purveyors of a prepared and packaged curriculum provided by a very powerful knowledge industry. Learning on the other hand is viewed from a very linear perspective, like a train racing along a railroad track. The course is determined and no detours are allowed. The only variable is the

speed by which the journey is made.

This approach fails to recognize that teachers are active participants in the process of shaping educational change, and does not take into account the realities of the school and classroom situations teachers are confronted with. Again, the image of the teacher conjured here underscores the importance and nature of teacher professional development. What policymakers overlooked is that:

Policies by themselves don't impart knowledge; they create the occasion for educators to seek new knowledge and turn that knowledge into new practice. Hence teacher development is the main link connecting policy to practice (Elmore & Burney, 1997:2).

This inquiry attempts to go beyond the rational model of reform in applying teacher learning perspective, which requires a critical approach and holistic evaluation. For instance, Cuban (1990:5) pointed out that the rational model has not done well in the practical realities of the school and classroom since these do not conform to the assumptions embedded in the rational approach.

Furthermore, policymakers and politicians, by insisting on teacher appraisal, sought to pursue accountability within the education system, and this was done in the guise of standardization and improving the quality of education. Thus, DAS is a demonstration case of control over teachers. The issue of whether it has promoted changes in professional roles and practices that have the capacity to develop teachers and enhance teacher-learning remains illusive. DAS focuses on teacher development and the implicit recognition of the importance of improving the quality of education. To emphasize the point made earlier on, despite the official rhetoric of teacher professional development emphasized in the policy, there is no evidence to support the claim that DAS has been effective in enhancing professional development let alone teacher learning thus leading to improved classroom practice.

Taking into account what happens when policy hits the ground¹⁶, I wanted to challenge these assumptions. This inquiry adopted a narrative approach, one that

¹⁶Quoted from Wolf et al (1999:1) Policy implementation processes in Malawi and Namibia.

provided teachers with the opportunity to tell their stories of how the implementation of DAS policy had influenced their learning and development. It was important to revisit concepts such as appraisal, professional development and teacher learning as a guide for my framework and focus. It became evident that implementing DAS in school contexts that are diverse in terms of physical and human resources, political factors at play and lack of coordination and coherence within the system was problematic because of the negative impact on teacher learning and development.

6.2 Putting Policy into Practice

The line of demarcation between policy development and implementation creates a top down conception of the policy process. This is reflected in the way teachers are perceived in the policy process, that is, they are seen as receivers and implementers of policies, which is a way of thinking adopted when following a linear approach. Darling-Hammond (1990) argues that conflicting mandates and expectations create confusion among teachers and students. Thus effective professional development activities are important for assisting teachers to balance the tension of teaching and their own journey of lifelong learning and inquiry. Policymakers need to acknowledge that implementing what they view as best practices does not necessarily lead to development, competence and commitment which are important in the implementation of policies.

Teacher learning as a conceptual framework enabled me to make sense of the complexity of the process and to examine the process in an integrated fashion. Therefore, guided by the conceptual framework and key issues that emerged, data were analyzed in order to generate the findings reported in this study.

The implementation of DAS policy in the North West Department of Education unfolded as follows: The national and provincial departments of education, teacher unions and the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) agreed on the development of the policy and the date for its implementation. The process was agreed to and signed by all stakeholders in 1998 (ELRC, Resolution Number 4 of 1998). Between 1998 and 2000, several ad hoc and uncoordinated attempts were employed in the implementation of DAS at both school level and education offices.

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According to Molale (04/2003), a senior official interviewed, some attempts included advocacy of the policy, setting up of DAS coordinators in the districts and DAS committee at head office level. Furthermore, closer analysis of the records revealed that there was no dedicated implementation structure and financial resources for DAS.

By the year 2001, it was clear that the implementation of DAS experienced serious slippage. Instances of some schools not implementing the policy, whilst others merely discussed it during staff meetings surfaced on a large scale. In addition, those who attempted to implement the policy were confronted with the problem of appraisees choosing friends for peer appraisal. The appraisal process which required different groups of people as panel members, added to the implementation problems and this led to the collapse of office-based DAS. The absence of a system to channel through identified skills gaps of educators and lack of further training were all cited as contributory factors to the poor implementation of DAS. Finally, by 2002, schools were no longer implementing DAS, the ELRC and Unions on the other hand raised concerns about the government's obvious lack of commitment towards DAS policy.

Instead of addressing the challenges that compromised the implementation of DAS, the Department of Education introduced Whole School Evaluation Policy (WSE), which was a product of the National Quality Assurance Coordinating Committee (NQACC) rather than Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC) as a structure. Such a move resulted in great resistance and rejection from SADTU and teachers in general.

Furthermore, in the NWDE, the implementation of DAS policy took place without a budget and setting up of appropriate structures. For instance, DAS "found itself" in the Research and Training Unit (RTU) and it became the responsibility of one person who was a Chief Education Specialist (CES) who ran it on an ad hoc basis. Since the enunciation of the policy in 1998, the situation remained as such until October 2002 when it was finally re-located to the QACD. The concern is: why was this allowed to happen in the face of such overwhelming evidence to support its failure.

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This scenario provided a picture of the provincial education department which had no knowledge of what it takes to implement a policy effectively, especially one aimed at teacher professional development. Thus, the NWDE can also be viewed as an organization that takes major policy decisions without financial planning for the implementation process. In 2001, SADTU for example, raised concerns about the lack of funding and absence of staff for DAS (SADTU Memo, 2001:21). On the whole the NWDE did not take into consideration the critical issue of resources and support to ensure proper implementation. Therefore, the way the policy was implemented did not relate to its intentions of developing teachers professionally as well as presenting opportunities for learning.

Secondly, what I observed as a very important issue is that the policy unfolded with different effects within the diverse resource contexts and amongst the twelve teacher cases. The fact that the implementation of DAS and now IQMS still does not distinguish between well-resourced schools, and disadvantaged poorly resourced schools that are mostly black and located in rural and farming communities is a cause for concern. In support, Jansen (1999:90) argued:

...well resourced white schools already had significant advantages that guaranteed a more successful implementation
...a policy must of necessity discriminate in the allocation of resources and expertise if implementation is to succeed in the majority of South African classrooms (1999:91).

In the most disadvantaged and poorly resourced farm school, namely, Retlafihla Primary, DAS unfolded with negative effects. The reality in the school context gave a picture of why policies fail to be properly implemented, because of the one size fits all model used and the hands off approach by the provincial government. The assumption that all schools are equal led to unequal consequences. Again, there are differences in how teachers shape reality. Hargreaves (1994:54) points out that:

what the teacher thinks, what the teacher believes and what the teacher assumes, all have implications for the process in which the policy is translated into practice.

At John Edwards Primary, a well-resourced former white school, and Bareng Primary, a averagely resourced rural school, the implementation of the policy unfolded with almost the same effects. The difference could be seen in the varying degrees. Some teachers revealed that DAS influenced them positively in terms of attitudes towards the policy, which they had originally viewed to be the same as inspection. The negative effect became clear when the majority of teachers indicated that they have not benefited professionally from DAS.

Finally, the implementation of DAS policy was dependent on a coherent system within the Department of Education. For example, coordination and consultation were key issues in the various sections of the department of education as well as setting up of structures and allocation of finance to ensure proper implementation. Thus, the breakdown and slippage in the implementation of DAS can be linked to a system that was not properly set in motion.

Taking the above into consideration, as well as supporting findings in chapter five, a set of propositions are put forward:

Proposition 1: *Policy evaluation, monitoring and support are important for successful implementation of policy.*

Evidence from the study showed that the NWDE did not have any structures and mechanisms in place to support the effective implementation of DAS policy. As a result of this weakness, the implementation of the policy did not present teachers with opportunities for learning. Teachers could not ascribe their learning to the DAS experiences given the negative experiences of the implementation process.

For effective implementation of policies, there must be systems in place for monitoring, evaluation and support. Lack of monitoring and evaluation exacerbated the problem of commitment and poor capacity building. The following comment from Desiree supports what has been highlighted:

Too many changes about DAS make you wonder who is really responsible for the policy. It is as if different sections are fighting about DAS and they all suggest different things. My other concern

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is why are we ever appraised because nothing happens after the appraisal. This shows you that they are not sure themselves (Bar.D. HOD³9).

The above statement showed the kind of uncertainty and confusion that affected the implementation of DAS and impacted negatively on teacher learning and professional growth. What is interesting is that the policy was developed and negotiated for by the teacher unions, ELRC and DoE, but what emerged is contradictory. Although each province was responsible for the launch of the policy, what is intriguing is that the NWDE in particular neglected to set up structures and allocate finance for the policy, and even overlooked locating it in a specific directorate. The comment from provincial executive manager gives support:

DAS was not allocated to a specific directorate, so I can say it affected many things such as delaying proper implementation training, monitoring, in short nothing worked (QA Chief Director/07/2003).

This oversight can also be linked to the problem of the policy not unfolding as intended because no directorate was responsible for taking charge of the implementation process. On the other hand various accounts from teachers highlighted uncertainty and an indication of the disruptions linked to the implementation of DAS policy. This was discussed under resource context in chapter 4. The situation at Retlafihla Primary School demonstrated the negative effect of lack of support. The principal described it as a “forgotten school” (Ret. Pri.6). The concern here is: how can schools be expected to effectively implement policies if there is lack of support from the Department of Education. Although the QACD was later tasked with the resuscitation of DAS, no additional resources (human and finance) were provided by the NWDE. The same resources that were used for WSE, SE and other responsibilities of the directorate had to be stretched to cover DAS activities as well. For example, 43 staff members from the QACD were responsible for 36000 educators in the province within schools that were classified as follows:

Table 3. Summary of Schools in the North West Province

Farm Schools	357
Rural Schools	1290
Township Schools	353
Town Schools	130
TOTAL	2130

(NWDE, 2003)

***Private Schools are excluded.**

Given this scenario, effective evaluation and monitoring of the policy in the whole province, which is largely rural as described in chapter 4, was not possible. In addition, the provincial monitoring programme conducted by the QACD which unfolded for the first time in 2003 also showed the problem of lack of capacity to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and support. According to the report presented at the Quality Assurance Colloquium (September, 2003), 607 schools were sampled for monitoring which was administrative in nature, and the instrument only targeted 7 aspects out of 14 to determine progress registered. The aspects were as follows:

- Democratic election of the SDT
- Training of staff on DAS
- Management plan drawn
- Identification of appraisees for 1st and 2nd phases
- Constitution of panel and election of chairpersons
- Files opened for appraisees

The limited focus which excluded the most critical aspects of determining the extent to which DAS had influenced teacher learning and affected classroom practices was due in part to lack of capacity as indicated above to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation. For a policy to succeed at the implementation level, a basic functionality of the education system is critical. In addition, the effective role of the Department of Education in supporting and monitoring is likely to enhance implementation.

Fullan and Miles (1992) argue that for teachers to move from a professional development experience directly into implementation characterized by uncertainty and confusion requires support and an appreciation of the difficulties that are linked to the process. The implementation of DAS policy requires teachers to fit new techniques and practices as part of their development, and these needed guidance and support for the changes or adaptations to be made. Teachers have the power to resist/ignore policy directives from the top management. The solution does not lie in enforcing compliance and obedience, but in promoting commitment and a sense of ownership among the teachers. Therefore, monitoring and support are important for continuation, as they would enable teachers to deal with the challenges. These measures give teachers the necessary encouragement and motivation they need in handling the challenging tasks intrinsic to the implementation process.

Timing is also crucial, for it will be unfair to expect too much too soon from teachers. Thus, monitoring, and evaluation procedures must focus on outcomes that are meaningful and should be linked to the constraints of the context. Quality of support is important in the case of DAS policy, as teachers require support to adapt new practices to their unique contextual conditions thus helping them to analyze the effects of the policy. The evaluation, monitoring and support provided need to find the optimal mix for the context, uniqueness of individual teachers and the culture of the schools in which they work (Guskey, 1995). In addition, the importance of having a holistic understanding of what educational change is cannot be overemphasized. Such an understanding would add leverage to the best approach of policy implementation.

Therefore, it is important for the Department of Education to ensure that systems are in place to facilitate the implementation process. It should be noted that creating structures is not enough. Provision should be made for consistent leadership, support and monitoring.

Proposition 2: *The implementation of policy (DAS in this case) is likely to have optimal effects on teacher learning and development if an integrated and coherent strategy is adopted.*

Findings showed that one of the reasons for the failure of the policy in enhancing teacher learning was the lack of integration and coherence. This was further demonstrated by failure to link OBE (C2005) to DAS as well as linking training received during implementation of C2005 to training for DAS.

The issue of OBE emerged as an important concern raised by teachers. Selbie for example, remarked:

The problem we have in our school is OBE. We did not get enough training, and we are still not sure about many things. So, when you have to be appraised for DAS, your lesson is OBE approach, how do you get assessed about that when you do not know it very well (Ret.S.HOD⁵5).

Some teachers are still grappling with the problem of implementing Curriculum 2005 and RNCS for others and yet they are appraised using the classroom observation instrument based on the OBE approach. Furthermore, discussions with a senior official (Molale/10/04) revealed that the directorate or unit responsible for OBE was not consulted or had any discussions with those responsible for the mentioned policies.

The lack of coherence also led to the confusion that arose and this is supported by comments raised by Elsie who pointed out the following:

We are appraised during visits for WSE, and we are expected to be appraised again for DAS. Is WSE replacing DAS? Lately a policy like PMDS has also been introduced and indicates that teachers have to be appraised. So, which is which? To make matters worse PMDS is handled by different people (JE.E. HOD¹).

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Discussions held with the chief director (QACD) during a follow up on the above issue clarified and supported the concern raised by teachers, that is, DAS and WSE are in one directorate (QACD) and PMDS falls under Human Resource Directorate (HRD) (Quality Assurance Chief Director 10/2003). Interestingly, when PMDS was developed, the QACD was never consulted and yet they both focus on teacher development through the appraisal system. This evidence really challenges the issue of integration and coherence of policies. To a large extent it also shows that different units in the department of education are not communicating with one another. The new IQMS policy now requires that QACD and HRCD should communicate, consult and to ensure effective implementation.

Furthermore, in South Africa, teachers are inundated with policies without any effort to show how they relate to those that are already in place. The relations among C2005, RNCS, DAS, WSE and PMDS to mention but a few, have not been spelt out. There is no mention of how these many policies contribute to a growing professional knowledge base. As Fullan and Miles (1992) point out, the result is usually an enormous overload of uncoordinated efforts all aimed at change. In the case of the mentioned policies, these attempts targeted teacher professional development. This pattern of efforts towards innovation not only affects teacher development; but it also provokes scepticism which does not pave the way for allowing teachers to open up and learn from these initiatives.

Therefore, for these efforts aimed at teacher professional development to succeed, they must provide descriptions of how the innovations can be integrated, i.e., they must be presented as part of a coherent framework for teacher development. It is only when a coherent strategy is adopted where the policies are systematically integrated that opportunities for teacher learning and development would become possible. This framework would also allow teachers to see the links among these different policies.

There was lack of coherence and integration from the stage of policy development up to the implementation stage. Although the mentioned policies have more aspects in common, they have been handled as separate and different right from the onset. The integration and coherence can be linked to the fact that these policies aim at improving the quality of education as the main focus area, school improvement,

teacher development, organizational structures and the effective use of resources. However, since 1995, in line with global shifts and local imperatives, much of the attention to quality continued to be at a legislative rather than operational level. By 1997, notions of efficiency, effectiveness and standards were increasingly under discussion and certain initiatives were taken to institutionalize quality functions and to address quality concerns directly. In a way, this can be linked to the mentioned policies. Central to the policies is the teacher, thus supporting the argument that the teacher's role in the policy process cannot be ignored.

Lack of communication also emerged with the latest development where the provincial office of the Director General and Deputy Director General took a decision to outsource the training of trainers which was run by QACD without their knowledge (QACD/07/2004), thus confirming the concern about lack of consultation, cooperation and coordination of activities. The provincial education department's lack of foresight on the issue of capacity building for teachers is again demonstrated in the decision to outsource the training programme. If training is not integrated into other departments, the department of education will not be in a position to take responsibility for failures or problems.

Although an attempt has been made by the national Department of Education to address integration and coherence of the policies, a gap still exists in terms of finance and management for effective implementation. For instance DAS, WSE and PMDS have been integrated to what is now called IQMS. Despite this attempt at bringing about coherence, no funds were set aside by the NWDE to enable the QACD to handle the more inclusive and broader policy. Research shows that policies fail because of ill-conceived or inadequate plans for implementation. This is evident by the lack of finance or linking the budget to the implementation process. The NWDE did not make any financial provisions, and this is supported by information I obtained from the QACD. It was also indicated that the national department of education funded all activities around DAS and WSE since the inception of the policies.

Proposition 3. *For teacher professional development and learning to be meaningful and effective, policymakers need to take teacher working contexts and leadership into account.*

Evidence showed that teachers interacted differently with the policy given their work contexts. Although context presented teachers with opportunities for learning on the one hand, it also contributed to the disjuncture between understanding and practice on the other hand. Leadership relationship revealed that the way teachers interacted helped in providing an understanding why principals can contribute to teacher learning through influencing the work-place environment.

The cases of Bareng and Retlafihla Primary schools serve as examples in the lack of effective teacher development and learning opportunities as a result of work context. The following remark from the principal of Retlafihla is indicative of the influence of context on teacher learning and professional development:

For us in our school I don't think we will be in a position to develop. As I have said, we have a problem of staff shortage i.e. three teachers handling all grades (1-7). We have no resources plus the problem with the farm owner. Our situation is such that, DAS will not change much because we cannot implement it as we are required to do (Ret: Pri.)

Selbie mentioned the difficult working conditions that made the implementation of DAS difficult and supported the principal when she said:

I do not see how DAS is going to help us because we don't have anything (S. HOD⁵⁴).

With specific reference to Retlafihla Primary, the negative situational constraints inherent in the work context did not provide opportunities for learning. In the case of Bareng Primary, although the work context was a limiting factor because of inadequate resources, strong leadership encouraged teacher learning and growth. The following comments from the three departmental heads support the influence of strong leadership and work context:

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In our school the principal is supportive and very pushy and this influenced us a lot. The principal is someone who always goes out of her way to obtain information (Bar:R.HOD²).

In addition, Desiree pointed out the problem of workload and inadequate resources as having affected teacher learning and development in a negative way. She commented as follows:

Educators are overloaded and with too many things expected from them. To make matters worse we also don't have adequate resources (Bar:D.HOD³).

Peter's comments also showed the importance of leadership and school environment in supporting teacher learning and professional development. He commented as follows:

The principal provides strong leadership, and our school has a special ethos of educators working together. I do acknowledge that there are teachers who are not prepared to work (cheque collectors) and this makes other teachers angry. But on the whole we have a supportive school environment with adequate resources and no overcrowded classes. Thus opportunities for development are there and it depends on you the educator to use them (JE:D.Pri.)

Inferences drawn from Peter's comments confirm the influence of work context and strong leadership on teacher learning professional development. The way in which the principal behaves and interacts with teachers can help to shape teachers' perspectives of their development and the schools' professional relationships. The assertion that teachers are constrained by their work context can be seen in the teacher cases at Retlafihla primary. In their situation, resources to support change do not exist. Compounding the problem is the issue of organizational structure, especially the formal authority of the principal, which has been upstaged by the farm owner.

It has also emerged from the study that teachers working in the same school environment with similar constraints do behave in different ways. This is seen in John Edwards and Bareng primary schools, and it challenges the hegemonic view of teacher work context and its relationship to the way they behave that is, react to change, develop and open themselves up for opportunities to learn.

It is evident that teacher learning is influenced by context, which includes school, classroom, other colleagues, students and what they teach. It is how the teacher interacts with these that help to define teacher learning and professional development aspects. Therefore recognizing the importance of contextual differences will influence policy makers to consider the dynamics of change in the various environments. Teachers' working context is quite dynamic. Teachers change and adapt in response to various influences that either emanate from the teachers or are environmentally imposed.

Given the above issues, it is thus important for policymakers not only to take into account the various teacher work contexts, but also to explore the link and influence on teacher learning. Context provides an important platform for understanding effective professional development. Therefore, exploring teacher learning in different resource contexts, especially rural and farm contexts can provide a basis from which to question assumptions that are inherent in conceptions of teacher professional development policy and practice.

Scribner (1999) supports the influence of work context because it can help to shape or present possibilities for teacher learning in many ways. Sykes (1999) acknowledges that teacher learning focuses on the importance of learning in context and the acquisition of knowledge relevant to the professional context. The common mistake committed by policymakers in policy implementation is to assume that all things are equal or to ignore the diversity in terms of resource contexts.

Proposition 4: *Teachers' professional development and learning can be strengthened by their participation in the professional learning community structures, which have the potential of creating collegial support and information sharing.*

Sharing with colleagues is one of the important ways of promoting teacher learning within a professional community. Teachers are provided with opportunities to seek explanations, ideas, and examine alternatives. This means that professional development opportunities need to be organized to encourage participation and to enable teachers to develop meaningful practices. In giving support to these views, Calderon (1999:96) stated that:

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Professional development must be viewed as a collegial structure that facilitates the implementation of a dynamic programme constantly under review and improvement – these are called teacher learning communities.

In these learning communities, development takes place within collegial relationships. Teachers can learn about themselves, about others and about teaching and learning. On the contrary, Clement and Vandenberghe (2000) caution that collaboration in itself should not be considered as the best way of addressing teacher professional development. They argue for a balance of collegial collaborative work and individual work by the teacher as a positive way of looking at professional development. In addition, the balance needs to take different forms of different schools and for different teachers. These issues were highlighted through findings in this inquiry where the effects of contexts could be seen even in the way teachers collaborated.

Teachers' personal and professional identity can be enhanced through collaboration with colleagues. Nias (1998:1257) points out that:

A teacher's colleagues play a central role in the development, meeting or failing to meet the need in turn, for practical and emotional assistance; referential support: professional simulation and extension; and the opportunity to influence others.

Therefore what is necessary is a developmental approach towards collaboration that is realized at different times in different ways throughout the teachers' careers. In this way, the need for investing in their continual development will be accentuated. Also, when teachers work in a mutually supportive environment they may be able to construct a view of themselves as empowered professionals (Brisoe, 1996). This implies that they could generate knowledge that may lead to lasting change, dispelling the view that they are practitioners who implement practices decided by others.

A look at John Edwards Primary as represented by Peter, shows the influence of collaborative efforts. Peter also indicated that his school was already involved in promoting professional development and his colleagues were highly motivated.

They do engage in discussions and share ideas now and then in their supportive school environment. He noted:

At our school, we do support one another and this enabled us to handle DAS. We also have strong leadership in our principal. The one thing that he has always encouraged is teamwork. So, we are able to approach one another for assistance (JE:D.Pri.)

The case of Bareng Primary also supports evidence from John Edwards Primary.

We were able to participate actively and attend workshops because the principal went out of her way to support us in obtaining the necessary information and arrange for teachers to attend DAS workshops. (Bar:R.HOD²).

Although this kind of support is available from the principal at Bareng, some of the teachers were not very supportive of each other. The case of Retlafihla Primary also showed how collaboration enabled the three teachers in the school to cope despite the problems they are confronted with. Zolile commented as follows:

Although we are seriously understaffed we do talk to one another during breaks and sometimes after school, share problems and give each other support. This does not happen a lot but we know we can rely on one another (Ret:Pri.).

Evidence from the above cases indicates how crucial support is, especially leadership support. A strong, encouraging principal who is open to change, believes in teachers and does not impose her/his own ideas can help to promote opportunities for learning and professional development. Collaborative relationships build trust, are essential to the development of ideas and can also help to promote professional development. This kind of support encourages teachers to seek improvements because the nature of teachers work is such that there is always room for learning. In addition, professional development can be promoted if teachers adopt a culture of collaboration.

Taking the above issues into consideration, it is evident that what should be advocated are collaborative initiatives in schools that will benefit teachers in the face of reform challenges. This is an important aspect because reform efforts have paid little

attention to the implications of these changes for teacher learning and collegial relationships.

Proposition 5: *Teacher professional development can be strengthened by recognizing teachers as learners and to consider what they do as part of their learning process. The dominant approach to teacher professional development is antithetical to what promotes teacher learning.*

This study showed that teacher learning could not just be equated to simple implementation of policy (DAS) because teacher learning is not only a professional process but also a highly personal and emotional process.

DAS policy did not promote the teacher as a learner, yet teachers, as learners are critical to the process of educational change. However, findings revealed that teacher participation in DAS changed most of the teachers' negative attitudes towards appraisal. The knowledge that these teachers acquired helped to clarify understanding of the policy. For others, participation helped them to perceive themselves positively.

Findings also showed that we cannot talk about improving the quality of education without first improving the teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes. Government should be willing to invest in effective professional development programmes that promote the teacher as learner. The way in which policy makers and the Department of Education have designed professional development programmes and professional knowledge has been external to the teacher. This will underscore the key role teachers' play in the process of change. If viewed as learners, they will influence the kinds of professional development programmes designed for them.

Teachers as learners are important not only within the confines of DAS but as indicated above. Professional development is offered as a reform strategy aimed at improving the quality of education, which should improve teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is therefore important to recognize teachers as learners and what they do as part of the learning process. It should be noted that routine experiences should not be viewed as contributing to the formation of the knowledge base, but as unique circumstances that offer the basis for adding to professional knowledge.

Although various arguments raised in the conceptual framework pointed out that teacher learning is complex and difficult to measure in professional development, there is still a case to be made for supporting that professional development should be about teacher learning. When teachers are viewed as learners, professional development activities should include changes in knowledge, beliefs and attitudes that would lead to the acquisition of new skills, concepts and processes related to teaching. For instance, the main aim of any professional development activity is to prepare teachers to enact the curriculum in their classrooms. Central to this activity is teacher learning related to preparation for instruction and the instructional activities. As Fishman et al (2001:5) point out:

What is taught or learned by teachers in the context of professional development is the “content” of teacher professional development. Teacher learning of content is facilitated by a range of strategies for professional development.

When teachers are viewed as learners, and are also afforded the opportunity to select learning experiences aimed at their personal development this can provide a framework for analyzing their learning from a perspective of curriculum theory (Briscoe, 1996). In addition, the teacher as learner can construct a personal curriculum and select appropriate resources for use.

Cochran-Smith (1998:920) argues that with teachers viewed as learners, this may offer a way to:

Conceptualize fundamental questions about knowledge, commitment and interpretations that guide teachers, their social relations, practices, experiences and strategies that inform and influence those perspectives.

Taking the above into consideration, then policymakers can begin to highlight the importance of well-organized professional development activities, which can promote teacher learning. This will also necessitate reviewing the central role played by teachers in educational reform and working with them in ways that will enable them to see their own value not only in the school contexts but also in the reform process. Teacher involvement in this manner will help in challenging conventional views about

teacher development. Teachers will be in a position to address how their development should unfold using collective professional judgement. Teachers bring knowledge to their school their school and classroom settings. This knowledge needs to be examined and linked to the process of designing professional development activities. Conceptions of professional development and teacher learning will then be reconstructed from a teacher's perspective.

In addition, paying particular attention to the teacher as learner would involve teachers in influencing the process of professional development. What is still problematic is that teacher professional development is still a top-down process. For this effective change to occur, professional development needs to be transformed with the teacher playing a meaningful central role in the process.

6.3 Research Findings on Policy Breakdown

In an attempt to understand the breakdown between policy goals and effects, I employed rational theory, since policymakers use the rational theory to motivate and to drive change and reform initiatives. I took into consideration the assumption underlying the planning process that is, the degree of rationality that characterizes it.

The Department of Education also adopted an overly rational view in the policy process and this is evident in the case of DAS, WSE, PMDS and now IQMS. The problem with this approach is that it is limited in potential for enhancing change for teachers especially in the area of professional development, and this also limits opportunities for teacher learning in different contexts. For instance teachers are confronted with multiple innovations with unplanned changes that impact on classroom practice. It was evident that the Department of Education underestimated the complexity of teacher professional development, which was to be realized through DAS policy. The problem included the absence of structures, lack of finance, inadequate training, monitoring and coherence. These shortcomings had a negative impact on the outcomes of DAS.

The failure of policy implementation is due to many constraints, but the major cause of policy failure can be attributed to lack of capacity at different levels, especially in the North West Province. Teachers were expected to understand and implement DAS with relative ease. This assumption is based on the misinformed rational thinking that change could be achieved in a step-by-step approach. To demonstrate the problem, DAS was expected to be implemented in 1999 with all structural and other arrangements being put in place in 1998, but teachers did not receive any training for almost three and half years. When the training sessions started, the various stages of the appraisal process were superficially addressed. In addition, appraisal was mostly unwelcome and regarded as a threatening process by teachers. This can be linked to the findings that change in professional behaviour, where it occurred was not because of DAS, but other factors were cited as having promoted opportunities for development. Furthermore, teacher appraisal as a tool for development has not realized its goals because of absence of follow up or action towards addressing teacher improvement; e.g. all teacher cases have only been appraised once. This absence of follow-ups and lack of continuous training added to the implementation problem.

A look at the school environment showed that schools and teachers were still not in a position to handle change and policies in a realistic manner given the uneven allocation of resources, diverse backgrounds in teacher qualifications, experience and training. Furthermore, teacher learning was hampered by the unpredictable changes during the implementation process, from DAS to WSE then IQMS, Curriculum 2005 and RNCS, which were externally imposed to realistically address changes in classroom practice. This scenario gave a picture of uneasy tension between policy development and implementation. Shifting tension in environmental turbulence can be cited in the situation where the provincial government lost control in the case of the farm school where the farm owner could make major decisions on the lives of teachers with a negative impact on teacher development.

What I view as an interesting development in the process of integration and coherence is the shifting of scope and nature of the “new policy” resulting from the incorporation of DAS, WSE, and PMDS to IQMS. With shape-shifting, efforts simply result in a form in which appearances are changed without genuine improvement in

the new policy. Merchant (1995:3) argues that: “the concept of shape-shifting conveys a temporary alteration of outside appearances for the purposes of deception”. Although the metaphor may be out of place, it tends to characterize what has happened with DAS, WSE and PMDS to what is now called IQMS.

My concern is if DAS was inadequate in addressing the complex issues of teacher professional development, let alone teacher learning, how certain are we that IQMS will be successful, especially in light of constrained resources? Furthermore IQMS is unfolding under similar conditions as DAS.

The legitimating of this broadening of scope and integration was strengthened by the move to address quality education. It was also envisaged that the policy would be in a position to promote a reform process aimed at the improvement of teachers and schools. Thus, for policymakers the assumption was that integrating and changing the policy would lead to quality education.

Although the reasons appeared to be acceptable, the policy seems to have lost focus due to teacher reactions and responses. During the initial implementation of DAS, teachers were reluctant and unwilling to be appraised, but with IQMS the situation has taken a dramatic change. The focus on Performance Management linked to salary progression is now more appealing and teachers are now willing to be appraised mainly for monetary gains. Although IQMS also emphasize providing quality education, all that is now lost. Ironically, the features of DAS i.e. development or improvement of teachers which at its inception was its strength is now lost through integration with other policies. DAS had promises of promoting teachers as learners if it was effectively implemented, but with the shift towards IQMS the situation has now changed.

6.4 Analysis of the Effects of Developmental Appraisal System

Since the inception of DAS in 1998 and other policies such as WSE, SE, PMDS, efforts have been directed at establishing structures, designing and integrating a new policy such as the Integrated Quality Management System. As this study shows, teacher development and teacher learning in particular have been hampered by

various factors. The main factors, which limited the overall effect of teacher development and learning through DAS, are as follows:

The lack of systematic thinking and planning, coordination and integrated approach to policy implementation, led to uncoordinated attempts at the practical level, that is, at the level of the teacher. For instance, for teacher professional development and learning to have been promoted through DAS, an effective training programme for the implementation of Curriculum 2005 was required. The intensive nature of OBE and Curriculum 2005 required teachers to be professionally well equipped and ready for DAS to be successful. This is due to the fact that teachers were appraised using classroom observation schedule, which was based on Curriculum 2005. Therefore inadequate preparation for teachers created tensions in the implementation of DAS. Furthermore, the introduction of WSE also added to the negative reaction that already existed. Central to the success of WSE was teacher appraisal, which had not been adequately addressed through DAS policy itself. Policymakers failed to recognize that teacher development was the key to the success of these policies. Given the confusion and contradictions that emerged, it was difficult for teacher learning to be promoted especially through DAS.

The focus of DAS policy also implied that well-resourced schools with a supporting school environment and qualified teachers would be at an advantage compared to poorly resourced schools. The disparity in resource allocation gave rise to questions challenging the need for such a policy. The problem of disparity in resource allocation within the South African schools is still a serious concern, which needs to be addressed for policies to succeed. Although the government engaged in attempts to address the problem of disparity in resource allocation for schools from 1994, the magnitude of the problem is such that it will take years before it can be satisfactorily dealt with.

Despite government's attempt to provide resources and funding through National Norms and Standard for School Funding (NNSF), equitable distribution of resources has been problematic, and as indicated above, the gap is still wide. Therefore, DAS unfolded in a scenario of different resource contexts, which impacted negatively for the disadvantaged schools. They were also expected to implement the policy without

having taken into consideration the different resource contexts, including teacher qualifications, experience, class sizes and workload, and school environment. This showed that government did not have a strategy that could assist in minimizing the negative effect.

Furthermore, opportunities for teacher development and learning require a supporting school environment, government support and resources. These emerged as serious problems for teachers particularly at the farm school. Lack of commitment and support from the provincial government underscored the importance of providing ongoing support to enable teachers to make the radical shift necessary for the success of DAS. The study also showed that the implementation of DAS in the different contexts did not yield the expected outcomes. Findings in this study showed that DAS did not facilitate teacher learning nor did it promote professional development. The following summary is presented:

- Although there is evidence that DAS did take place at John Edwards Primary School (five teacher cases), this study revealed that it did not have any significant effects on teacher learning. Despite its initial take-off in this well resourced school with leadership support, it did not promote teacher learning because of inadequate training, advocacy and lack of support from the NWDE. Most importantly, teacher learning is a complex process that requires time for any significant impact to show.
- At Bareng Primary School (four teacher cases), this study showed that DAS struggled to find practical expression among the involved teachers. Despite support from the principal, workload, overcrowded classes and lack of resources impacted negatively on teachers. As a result, the policy did not have any effects on teacher learning.
- With Retlafitlha Primary School (three teacher cases), this empirical study revealed that DAS did not take place as expected; hence it had no effects on teacher learning.

Finally, DAS policy further revealed the serious problem of weakness in management and capacity at provincial level and this had a negative effect in ensuring that teacher professional development was promoted and sustained. For instance, principals were powerless in taking action against teachers who refused to be appraised and those who challenged the comments and ratings during appraisal by panel members as well as the dishonest appraisals that occurred. The leadership problem played itself out in the chaos that surrounded the implementation of the policy as revealed in chapter four (research context 4.2). In addition, monitoring mechanisms within the NWDE are inadequate thus making it a challenge to obtain a fair picture on the effects of the policy in the various resource contexts. The Department of Education (2003:102) found that:

The programme monitoring mechanisms in South African schooling system are currently inadequate to provide a balanced picture of what the learner programme trends are at the various points in the schooling system.

Given the above issues that demonstrated the failure of the policy, I think the decision to implement DAS was too hasty to ensure the desired results. The implementation of the policy was mostly driven by political change largely characterized by fast paced implementation. For complex processes such as teacher professional development and learning the following are required:

- A well structured, coordinated and well supported teacher professional development programme on a continuous basis.
- Linking teacher appraisal to teacher learning and practice for the appraisal to have an effect on classroom practice.
- Providing optimum opportunities in which teachers can learn and thus improve the quality of education.
- Considering various resource contexts and environments in which policies unfold.

6.5 Conclusion

Adapting what government construes as a logical approach towards teacher professional development as seen in the case of DAS has thus far failed to deal with the deeper and complex issues involved in the development of teachers that can promote teacher learning. A move towards IQMS with its unintended outcomes further reveals a lack of vision in teacher development and poorly understood solutions to the policy process that will provide quality education.

As part of the concluding arguments for this inquiry, it is important to highlight some of the significant developments that characterized the implementation of DAS policy. These are summarized as follow:

- 1) It is rather intriguing that the provincial policy implementers, without the appropriate structures and financial resources, implemented an important policy such as DAS. This move provided overwhelming evidence to support its failure, as effective teacher learning and professional development require such resources and structures to be in place.
- 2) The one-size fits all approach became evident in this research. This implies that the various school contexts and how they impacted on teacher learning and development in the implementation of the developmental appraisal system were ignored.
- 3) The implementation of DAS appeared to have been taken as an-add on policy. This means that it was not integrated with other existing policies such as OBE. This is puzzling given the fact that the two policies were developed almost at the same time albeit by different structures. In addition, OBE is central to the implementation of DAS. The fact that DAS was finally integrated with WSE and PMDS (to what is now called IQMS) is a clear recognition that as a single policy it has failed.

- 4) A significant lesson in this study is the complexity of DAS policy. It is very cumbersome, given the number of panel members required to do appraisal. What was problematic was the inclusion of the outside member who may lack the school context.

If the effects of the developmental appraisal policy on teacher learning and professional development are dependent on the interplay among the various forces in the different stages of the policy that is, from development to implementation, it is imperative for policymakers to consider the implications of developmental appraisal policy for professional development and teacher learning. Finally, given data from the twelve teacher cases, this inquiry is concluded with the following implications:

- Performance Management System: Given the fact that the Department of Education has developed some of the best policies aimed at improving the quality of education (See 1.2), this study confirmed a lack of commitment and attention towards teacher professional development on the part of the department in question. It is therefore necessary to seek accountability across different levels of the education system. Introducing and instilling a culture of continuous appraisal would pave the way for innovations targeting teacher improvement. Such an effort would require not only support but also pressure on the part of the teacher. Performance management system should still aim at teacher development with the implicit recognition of improving the quality of education. In addition, the system adopted should enhance teacher learning as well as capacity to change classroom practice.
- Review of the Promotion System: The issue of teacher promotion system should be properly regulated to eliminate the effects of abuse and what seems to be a practice operating on an ad hoc basis. This implication is informed by current practices where a teacher's promotion is based mainly on a teacher being interviewed by a panel selected by the School Governing Body (SGB), with the teacher unions sitting in as observers. In some instances the SGB serves as the panel. This shows that the question of appraiser and appraisee will need to be re-examined. The current system of promotion is not based on continuous assessment but rather on individual performance during the

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interview. According to a senior official (Molale, 4/2004) the system is problematic because some teachers gain access to questions/interview instrument and end up being promoted not on merit. In addition, there is no proper performance management system in place, as the one in use has many flaws and totally disregards teacher professional development. Therefore, a review of the promotion system would be a step in the right direction in the process of teacher development.

- Incentives: This inquiry revealed that teachers viewed DAS as an ineffective form for promoting teacher learning and professional development and it did not validly assess the quality of their work. It also fell short of offering teachers incentives to improve their performance. The Integrated Quality Management System that is currently being piloted attempts to offer incentives for performance i.e., 1% salary progression. It is necessary for the Department of Education to revisit and review the issue of incentives linked to further qualifications. Acquisition of additional qualifications is an aspect of a teacher's professional development. A closer examination of this issue shows that it is part of the teacher learning process as well and a way of motivating teachers to improve themselves. Thus, it should be recognized through a system that offers incentives.

- Turning Schools/Staff rooms into Professional Learning Communities: Schools are structured into clearly defined classrooms that have created a culture of teacher isolation. Workloads and overcrowded classes leave teachers with little time for anything else, thus reinforcing isolation. In order to enhance professional knowledge and development, teachers need opportunities to engage in professional learning communities where they can discuss new materials and strategies to transform the way they teach. It is therefore essential to turn schools/staff rooms into learning communities. To a large extent, dissemination of information by principals especially policies is a problem for most schools. If schools/staff rooms become learning communities teachers would get the opportunity to engage in policy discussions. This is crucial because teacher learning as a social process would enable teachers to create different forms of discourse for talking about their

own development. This implies that apart from learning in context, the notion of situated learning will be embraced and promoted.

In order to achieve the above, the capacity of the province in policy implementation process will need to be evaluated and strengthened. To address the implementation problem sufficiently, strategies such as constant review of policy which can be attained through communication efforts at different levels of the system, meaningful capacity building for implementers, commitment and accountability not only from teachers but by all stakeholders need to be given attention. Attempts to respond adequately to the issues raised have implications not only for DAS policy in particular but also for the manner in which the South African government approaches the implementation of education policies.

Lastly, given the importance of teacher professional development in the reform process, there is need for further studies on how to effectively promote teacher learning. This is important because government and policymakers cannot talk about improving schools and the quality of education without addressing teacher learning which has emerged as a new and critical area for continuous professional development. In addition, research needs to address the link between teacher learning and diverse work contexts in different ways and to focus on continuous efforts to understand the issue of how teachers learn.