

CHAPTER EIGHT

BETWEEN THEORY AND DATA:

Explaining the Relationship between Assessment Policy and Assessment Practice

I am not conversant about the basics. I cannot really get deep into it. I don't have deep knowledge about it as such.¹

I do not understand everything in these documents. I have got all this information; I am not detailed so much in the sense of ideas.²

In the previous chapters I raised a number of questions emerging from this inquiry into teacher understandings and beliefs with regard to the new assessment policy, as well as teachers' assessment practices in the classroom. The pivotal question addressed in this final chapter is: Why do teachers assess students in ways observed? In other words: how can the continuities and discontinuities between official policy on assessment and teachers' assessment practices be explained? In this chapter I attempt to provide an explanation by drawing on the evidence emanating from the two case studies and relating this data to the conceptual framework (deep change) that framed this research (see Chapter Three).

Education reformers have repeatedly tried to change teachers' classroom practice using a variety of strategies, including the introduction of new educational policies as strategic levers for change. The success (or failure) of these strategies, including new policies, have been subject to many empirical studies, and various theoretical explanations were provided for its success or failure (see Chapter Four). In this chapter I seek to add to and extend this understanding of the relationship between policy and practice by providing a different explanation for understanding the relationship between policy and practice. In other words I open another window on the problem of educational change as it relates to new education policies. The window I propose is the conceptual framework on 'deep change' that I developed and described in Chapter Three. I summarise the salient features of 'deep change' as it relates to the findings from the study.

¹ A quotation from Teacher Dinzi

² A quotation from Teacher Hayley

Conceptual Framework- Deep Change

I draw widely on Fullan (1993, 1999b, 2001, 2003) in developing this conceptual framework I call 'Deep Change'. I distinguish between different kinds of change, namely, (1) non-change; (2) superficial or mechanical; (3) incremental change and (4) deep change. Non-change means there is no real change in the achievement of the goals of the policy; superficial change or mechanical change means changes only in the surface features of teacher behaviours where teachers go through the routines of change without understanding or committing to the underlying rationale and principles, or the deeper value-orientations and belief systems that underpin a new reform; incremental change means small steps in the change processes that can be described as evolutionary rather than sweeping, transformative changes signalled in ambitious policies of societies undergoing radical change; and deep change means teachers articulating meaningful understandings of a reform which in turn is reflected in deep changes in the nature and organisation of teaching. It involves a fundamental shift of mind in thinking about change. Deep change involves teachers altering the underlying assumptions, goals, philosophy or belief, skills, conceptions and behaviour regarding teaching and learning and assessment, in other words a change in culture. It implies teachers seeking the best knowledge and ideas in order to delve deeper into helping their students construct new meanings, solve problems, work in diverse groups, and become proactive learners in a complex changing world. It involves taking risks and living with uncertainty. Teachers committed to deep change see themselves as active agents of change rather than victims of change complying uncritically with policy reforms. It describes teachers who are able to negotiate between top-down and bottom-up strategies for changing their practices. It involves teacher collaboration, collaborations formed inside and outside the school. It means teachers fusing the intellectual, political and spiritual forces of change. It also means teachers making personal choices and commitments as well as taking personal responsibility to disrupt the status quo with respect to teaching, learning and assessment.

Deep change results from policymakers adopting a strong theory of education and a strong theory of change with regard to policy, and to make them operate in tandem (Fullan, 1999b, 2003). A theory of education includes the pedagogical assumptions,

the substance of content and pedagogy, and associated components such as moral purpose and the best knowledge in the policy. A theory of change includes the strategies formed to guide and support implementation. Fullan (2003) asserts that it is possible to have a strong theory of education but a weak theory of change, but then the resulting change from this combination will be superficial. The outcomes resulting from the intersections of the two types of theory of education with the two types of theory of change (action) will result in four different kinds of change illustrated below:

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

Theory of education and Theory of change

(Adapted from Fullan, 2003: 53)

There is no single theory of change that applies equally well in all situations therefore the change theory will need to be modified to the unique contexts of the change (Fullan, 1999b; 2003).

I shall use this new conceptual framework on deep change to explain the relationship between macro-level policies and micro-level practices, a relationship that is not only non-linear, but embedded with complexity, dynamism, and unpredictability. In this study I made three tentative propositions about deep change:

Proposition one: *Teachers may not have a deep, sophisticated understanding of a new assessment policy even if there is evidence of strong rhetorical commitment to this policy.*

Proposition 2: *Teachers may not be able to reconcile their own assessment beliefs and capacities with the stated goals of a new assessment policy*

Proposition 3: *Teachers may find that traditional assessment practices (that is, examinations and testing) hold greater efficacy in the classrooms than the alternatives required by a new assessment policy.*

I will use the findings from this study to test each of the three stated propositions. But before I engage in that task I shall explain why each teacher practiced assessment in the ways observed. The impact of any educational change is dependent on many and varied factors, such as factors internal to the school as well as factors external to the school environment. I shall focus on those factors that emerged from each case study.

Why Dinzi Implements Assessment Policy as Observed

The data from the case study on Teacher Dinzi revealed that she had a surface understanding of the new official policy on assessment, that her beliefs about the policy were both positive and negative, but leaning more towards the latter, and that her assessment practices in the classroom was weakly connected, if not disconnected from, the official policy on assessment. These findings provoke the questions: Why does Dinzi have a surface understanding of the policy? How will this surface understanding influence her assessment practice? Why are her beliefs mixed? How will her beliefs affect her assessment practice? Why her assessment practice was weakly connected if not disconnected to the official policy on assessment? In this section I therefore seek to explain Dinzi's assessment practices by drawing on the both empirical evidence from this case and the theoretical claims of the conceptual/theoretical framework on 'deep change'.

I identify several factors emerging from the study that constrained the successful implementation of the assessment policy by Teacher Dinzi. These are Dinzi's personal and professional characteristics, her understandings and beliefs of the policy, the school context, the nature in which the policy was introduced, her knowledge and skills, conflicting demands by educational administrators, policy conflicts and collisions, the nature of the training, the focus on Grade 9 or exit level grades, school based support, collaborative culture, monitoring and evaluation and ambivalence about the policy. These factors function in concert with each other to explain the disconnection between her assessment practice and the policy. There is also a

profound complimentary between surface understanding and beliefs about policy and its implementation in practice

Dinzi's personal and professional characteristics

Her age (forty years) and race (Black African) indicates that Dinzi has many layers of knowledge, skills, values, attitude, understandings and experiences shaped by the apartheid system of education, the oppressive and destructive effects of which have been well documented (see African National Congress, 1994; Christie, 1998; Department of Education, 1995; Hartshorne, 1992; Kallaway, 2002). These layers include firstly, her twelve years of primary and secondary schooling, secondly her four years of teacher 'training' in the homeland tertiary institutions, and thirdly, her approximately ten years of teaching - all in the old tradition dominated by behaviourism and fundamental pedagogics. She therefore has about twenty-six years of formal educational experiences and understandings that framed the teacher not only as a repository and transmitter of knowledge, but also helped frame the function of a teacher as an evaluator who tested whether the knowledge transmitted could be recovered from students as delivered by the teacher. In other words, it was a system that enforced and enhanced the ideas of rote teaching and learning, as well as the view of teacher-centeredness with students as passive recipients of the expert knowledge of teachers. Dinzi referred to this poor standard of education in her own background:

[Maybe] with the TED schools they are used to those terms, they used to practice assignments and projects, whereas the main Bantu Education had no emphasis put on these things.

(A1)

The other manifestation of this education and training legacy was her reliance on the textbook as an anchoring resource to guide teaching and learning. In fact Dinzi's faith in the uncritical use of textbooks is so solid that it is reflected in her committed use of two old science textbooks in her classroom, as discussed previously. The new assessment policy however requires that Dinzi make a paradigm shift from the burden of past understandings and practices to one that is 'student-centred' and 'outcomes-based' – a system deeply different politically, epistemologically, and pedagogically from the old system. Dinzi is expected to make a fundamental change at a level so

deep that it would be extremely difficult to achieve except under conditions of sustained teacher support and changes in classroom contexts.

The new assessment policy has been in operation for four years in the new education system (1998 to 2002), and Dinzi has two years experience of it, 2001 and 2002. This essentially means that this new policy has added another layer, a new and paradigmatically different one, over the other layers of twenty-six years of entrenched epistemologies and pedagogies. It seems obvious that the entrenched beliefs and practices would remain stable since it had not been unseated or challenged by this new policy. This layer of the past that has resulted in predictable patterns of teaching would indeed be extremely difficult to unseat, deconstruct or reconstruct. Several attempts to disturb this 'grammar of schooling' (Lortie, 1975) have affirmed stability more often than change (see Ball, 1990, Cohen, 1990, Ball and Cohen, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994). I argue that this patterned behaviour resulting from Dinzi's past educational experiences accounts for her superficial understandings of the new assessment policy, and consequently the observed unchanged assessment practices. She could therefore be expected to resort to the security and stability of tried and tested behaviours and routines in her professional experiences. Evans (2001:32) supports this argument by asserting that the tendency for people to cling to their past competencies is natural. This particular orientation of Dinzi is not her fault, but could be ascribed to the socio-historical legacies that she and many educators in South Africa carry. I am not suggesting that this layer has been calcified and resistant to change; what I am suggesting is that the effort required changing established patterns of thought and behaviour would require sustained and systemic intervention – something underestimated in South Africa's post-apartheid education reformers.

Dinzi's Beliefs about the New Assessment Policy

Teachers' beliefs about a policy play a central role in policy implementation, and inextricably linked to their attitude, will, and commitment towards policy learning which in turn will influence their implementation of the policy. Dinzi displayed mixed beliefs towards the new assessment policy, some were positive while others were negative, but the negative beliefs outweighed the positive. Her positive beliefs included: "portfolios are good, the standards are higher, all learners can learn" and

that a positive disposition should be embraced. However she also had negative beliefs such as: it involved too much paper work, required resources that the school could not afford; that continuous assessment was complicated, assessing portfolios was frustrating and de-motivating, the process was not well-planned, introduction was top-down, teachers were not well-trained, facilitators were not well prepared and she did not feel confident and empowered to implement the policy. It seems clear that if all the negative beliefs coalesce, its combined effects on her attitude and commitment towards change would be limiting for change. I would argue that such negative attitudes contribute to Dinzi's surface understanding of the policy and its unsuccessful implementation.

In this regard policymakers and educational administrators have not taken into account the emotional dimension of change (Hargreaves, 1998, 2002), or the concept of emotional intelligence as being advocated by educational change specialists (see Fullan, 1999b, 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Goleman, 1995, 1998; Hargreaves, 2004). Educational change is not only a technical exercise about developing capacity and providing resources, important as they are, but it is also a moral and deeply emotional one. A teacher may be very competent and capable in bringing about change and may have the ideal conditions to make the change work but if the teacher is not emotionally connected to the change, the change will not happen. It is therefore important for reason and emotions to garner the same respect, since they are interactive and critical for deep change to be accomplished, a view supported by Fullan et al (1999b:2):

Reconciling the respective powers of emotion and cognition increases one's individual and collective capacity for positive change.

If teachers have negative beliefs about a change, they could develop deep, negative attitudes and resistance towards the change, and getting their buy-in or ownership of the change would be extremely difficult. Ownership is critical to understanding and practicing something fundamentally new because:

[Shared] ownership of something new on the part of large numbers of people is tantamount to real change.

(Fullan, 2001: 92)

The importance of teacher ownership is supported by the study conducted by PriceWaterhouse Coopers in Britain (Fullan, 2003:5). I do not think that Dinzi is to be slighted for this lack of ownership or negative beliefs about the policy; it was the way that the policy was introduced to her as well as the nature of the training, topics which are discussed later in this section, that are some of the factors contributing to her surface understanding of the policy and its non-implementation.

The School Context

The school context is the set of conditions under which teachers operate; and this context is a factor in the successful implementation of change (Evans, 2001; Fink and Stoll, 1998; Fullan, 2003). As McLaughlin (1998) puts it “to ignore context is to ignore the very elements that make policy implementation a problem (p79).

With regard to the conditions in the school, Dinzi listed a litany of constraining factors that prevented her from successfully practising assessment in the ways required by the new policy. These included the lack of basic resources such as textbooks, chalk, dusters, photocopying paper, a properly equipped library, cupboards, and insufficient laboratories with relevant equipment, She also complained about the small size of her classroom, the large number of students in her class, the limited background or prior knowledge of the students, the limited English language proficiency of the students, and the fact that many students live alone with no parental supervision. Students are often caregivers to their siblings. Teachers have little time and too much paperwork. Furthermore, Dinzi complained that most students were so poverty stricken that not only were they undernourished, but also could not afford to access important resources such as the library, computers, internet facilities and other relevant materials to complete projects, assignments and additional activities. These conditions, beyond Dinzi’s control, are concerns that further explain her difficulties in practising the new forms of assessment expected from the new policy. Malcolm Gladwell (in Fullan, 2003:27) identified:

The power of context as one of three agents of change. The power of context says that people are a lot more sensitive to their environment than they may seem.

Another contextual problem reported by Dinzi was that the school had been under-staffed, and this under-staffing, she indicated resulted in her teaching time being overloaded. She reported that the provincial department of education responded to this problem of staff shortage by first hiring temporary teachers and then firing these temporary teachers. As discussed previously, temporary teachers were hired in the second term as a response to teacher overload but fired in the third term, the reasons unknown to Dinzi, the staff and the principal. This not only disrupted the continuity of teaching and learning, but it also caused discomfort and disappointment among the staff, including Dinzi, because they were overloaded with class teaching again. Overload is considered one of the main enemies of reform (Fullan, 2000). This view is supported by Evans (2001: 127) who observed that “turnover and reassignment of personnel are among the greatest hazards to innovation”. With regard to overload, the study by PriceWaterhouse Coopers is instructive (Fullan, 2003: 5). PriceWaterhouse Coopers were commissioned by the British government to study the working conditions of teachers and head teachers. Based on their findings they concluded that if the goals of the educational system were to be realised teachers’ workload needed to be reduced (p.5). This school context therefore certainly worked against Dinzi practising new forms of assessment suggested by policy even if she knew how to implement them. The emotional frustration developed as a consequence of being overloaded would certainly take its toll on Dinzi and the school staff because they enjoy no autonomy over staffing which “is essential to maintaining the impetus for innovation” (Loius and Miles, 1990:22).

Dinzi also reported burglaries in the school as a crucial problem; for example the computer and the printer had been stolen but had since been replaced through a fund raising campaign organised by the school.

An added contextual problem related to the large number of social problems that teachers had to address on a weekly, if not daily basis. One common problem was girls falling pregnant as a result of being raped by taxi drivers. Another was the high rate of absenteeism among students. Spending time and energy addressing these socio-economical problems could compromise the time and energy that Dinzi could spend on implementing the new policy.

The external context of the school had added to the internal contextual problems. For example, the degree of poverty, the low educational levels of parents, and parents not living with their children, limited the nature of support that the parents could provide to students for engaging in the new assessment activities such as projects and assignments, amongst others.

Dinzi's understandings and practices of the new assessment policy is inescapably constrained by her school context – one that could be viewed as uncongenial, if not hostile to Dinzi practising assessment in ways suggested in the new policy. Dinzi believed that the school “is not conducive to teaching and learning” (personal communication). It is clear that the context described above together with its established school dynamics of the past twenty-seven years would encourage and buttress the status quo rather than disrupt it. It would generate an inertial force opposing real and deep transformation. I support Fullan (2003) in asserting that transformative change addresses the basic working conditions of teachers to enable them to become fully and deeply engaged in new changes. In other words, a fundamental transformation or re-culturing of the context of the school needs to be achieved which is yet to happen at Delamani High School.

The way in which Dinzi was introduced to the new Policy

I will argue that the way the assessment policy and its related documents were introduced to Dinzi could have contributed to her superficial understanding of the policy and consequently its non-implementation.

Firstly the way Dinzi received the policy had been problematic. She reported that it was given to her at a staff meeting but that it was not discussed properly. This could imply that the policy was sent to the principal who in turn gave it to Dinzi. This process of policy flow demonstrates a fundamental flaw in the assumptions policy makers and administrators make with regard to the policy process, namely that there is a linear relationship between the presence of the policy and its understanding, that is, if teachers receive a copy of the policy they will understand it, and secondly, if teachers receive the policy they can and will implement it as policy makers desire; in

other words a direct relationship between policy and practice. The fallacy of this assumption is well known (see Jansen, 1997, 1998, Sayed & Jansen, 2001; Hargreaves et al, 1998). It also demonstrates their mistaken view of policy as a mechanical device and a packaged solution for change. It seems obvious that the said staff meeting had been an ‘information and instructions giving’ session therefore no proper discussion took place. This demonstrates the technical way in which the policy was introduced to Dinzi without any consideration for the conceptual development of deeper meaning and clarity about the policy. Fullan (2001:77) observed that teachers experienced difficulties at the implementation stage when they “find that the change is simply not very clear as to what it means in practice”. In fact Dinzi reported it would be valuable if:

The educators in the school come together and then look at the documents and try to understand it.

(A3).

She reported that she does not refer to the policy constantly. I believe that she does not refer to it because she does not understand it. And she does not understand it because it was given to her without the necessary opportunity to engage with its contents to develop the kind of deep meaning and purpose required for its successful implementation.

The way the other policy-related documents are received by Dinzi and the school is instructive in understanding why Dinzi has a surface understanding of the policy and unable to implement it as intended by the policy makers. I will provide quotes from the interviews (A3) to illustrate the way she received information:

What we get is just documents.

Given documents on what is to happen.

They sent us the assessment sheets with instructions ‘this is what we are expecting from you’, so you have to get your own learning.

Well usually they send a circular.

They circulate how many projects, investigations, experiments, assignments and so on”.

You are told today by a circular then tomorrow this is needed.

(A3)

This last quotation illustrates the kind of unreasonable pressure exerted on teachers that force them to engage in practices antithetical to the policy requirements, for example when Dinzi was requested to submit portfolios at short notice she reported:

It was so sudden, it means daily tests.

(A3)

Yet portfolios are supposed to include more than just tests. But teachers cannot be blamed for resorting to practices contrary to policy requirements if educational administrators place unreasonable demands on them. The quotations illustrate that the documents containing information regarding the policy are either handed out at workshops or sent to the schools for teachers to use and implement without any discussion of its underlying rationale, whether teachers understand it or not and whether conditions are conducive for its implementation. I call this a ‘posting’ model of policy that is devoid of any empirical or theoretical evidence to support it. This ‘posting’ of the policy is alien to any notion of professional involvement, commitment and responsibility, elements critical for deep change. Hargreaves (personal communication, February, 2004) refers to this form of delivery of policy documents as the “wheel-barrow model” to illustrate the filling of the documents into a receptacle and delivering it to the schools. This ‘posting’ or ‘wheelbarrow’ model reflects the importance that school administrators pay to the technical issues of policy implementation rather than to conceptual issues of clarity so critical for deep understanding and implementation of fundamental change. Having access to information is clearly not the same as understanding the information or developing clarity about its ideas. Dinzi confirmed her lack of clarity:

I find that now some terms given were not clear or not yet shown to be clear

(A3)

I discussed previously that she did not have clear conceptual understandings of critical and specific outcomes, assessment criteria and criterion-referenced assessment among other fundamental concepts relating to the new assessment policy. And the way the policy and its related documents were received is partly to blame for this ‘unclear’. Fullan (2001: 77) reminds us that “the more complex the reform the greater the problem of clarity”. The new assessment policy is not only complex but the changes demanded are overwhelmingly deep for most teachers – a ‘deep

assessment paradigm' where achieving clarity of the policy is crucial. And a lack of clarity:

Represents a major problem at the implementation stage; teachers and others find that the change is simply not very clear as to what it means in practice.

(p.77).

A consequence of a lack of clarity could also have contributed to the development of "false clarity" (p.77) where Dinzi reported that the changes involved changes in terms only, and that she had been doing similar forms of assessment before the new policy had been introduced. She obviously is interpreting the policy in an oversimplified way thus leading to false clarity, which translates to surface understanding of the policy and it's weak if not non-implementation.

Knowledge and Skills

Dinzi reported that she assessed the students' notebooks, projects, assignments, practical work, and portfolios, and engages in continuous assessment of students' work but my seventeen classroom observations revealed none of this. Her students also reported that they did none of these activities. She is aware of what to do but does not have the kind of deep knowledge and skills necessary to enable her carry out these different forms of assessment activities expected by the new policy. She conceded to her lack of knowledge and skills to implement the new policy:

Not yet, more training is still needed and support from GDE³.

(A3)

And this is lack of knowledge and skills are no fault of Dinzi. The way the new policy with its ambitious deep changes expected of teachers had been introduced to her as discussed, and the nature of training provided, which I take up later in the section, were wanting in providing the opportunity for her to develop this deep knowledge and skill base necessary for her to practice the new kinds of assessment.

³ Meaning the provincial Gauteng Department of Education

Elmore (2003:7) puts it more bluntly:

Can people in schools be held accountable for their effects on student learning if they haven't been provided the opportunity to acquire the new knowledge and skill necessary to produce the performance that is expected of them?

I would argue that the reason Dinzi did not practice assessment in the ways stated was that her information about the change was not translated to knowledge. I concur that

[Information] becomes knowledge only through a social, i.e. interactive process.

Envisioned change will not happen or will not be fruitful until people look beyond the simplicities of information ...to the complexities of learning, knowledge,

(Brown and Duguid in Fullan, 2003:47, emphasis in original)

Dinzi was aware of or informed about certain aspects of the policy such as using different assessment methods, but she lacked the deep knowledge and skills fundamental for its successful implementation.

Conflicting demands by the educational administrators

While the policy demands the implementation of the continuous assessment model by teachers, this mark combined with the examination mark is reduced at the end of the year to different symbols indicating levels of performance that could cause confusion in the minds of teachers. For example, for Grade 8 students, the provincial department of education requires teachers to indicate on the “Summative Record Sheet” symbols such as “-” for level not achieved, “/” for level partially achieved, and “*” for level achieved in respect of each learning area for each students. But in the “Progression Schedule” they expect teachers to use the symbols “O” for outstanding, “A” for achieved, “PA” for partially achieved’ “NA” for not achieved, and “NAS” for needs additional support in each learning area for each student. However, for the “Progression Schedule for the Grade 9” students on the other hand, the provincial department requires teachers to use marks ranging from 0 to 10 to 20 up to 100 marks as well as numbers “4” for achieved with excellence, “3” for achieved, “2” for partially achieved, and “1” for not achieved. It is not surprising that the teacher complained:

The documentation and demands from the department causes stress and pressure.

(Personal communication with teacher, 2 December 2002)

This conflicting demands made by the educational authorities could cause confusion in understanding the policy and consequently compromise its effective implementation.

Policy conflicts and collisions

Her superficial understanding of the rationale underpinning the new policy discussed previously could account for her unchanged assessment practice. Her superficial understanding is shaped I believe, by Dinzi implementing two different, disconnected and conflicting assessment policies simultaneously, one old and one new. As previously indicated Dinzi did not know that the major shortfall of the old/current assessment policy commonly known as NATED 550 was one of the two reasons that underpinned the development of the new assessment policy. In her grade 10 class the old NATED 550 policy was in operation while in Grades 8 and 9 the new outcomes-based assessment policy that was responding to the weaknesses of NATED 550 was in operation. These two policies with different and disconnected expectations from teachers could obviously cause confusion if not chaos that could contribute to surface understandings and unsuccessful implementation of the new policy. Confusion could lead to unhealthy levels of frustrations, anxiety and stress that could result in extreme difficulties of responding and adapting to change appropriately. Therefore the confusion emanating from the expectations of the two conflicting policies could be profound and should not be underestimated as a powerful constraining factor to developing a meaningful understanding of the new change and its successful implementation. Fullan (2001b: 27) concludes:

If there was ever a problem of meaning, it is amply demonstrated by the miasma of innovations and their sources.

Nature of training/professional development

The nature of the training experienced by Dinzi also accounts for her surface understanding of the new policy and her consequential weak implementation of it.

Dinzi reported that the only form of training she received had been in the form of workshops that were general in nature as it related to OBE. These were one-day workshops conducted away from school. But she received no training specifically for assessment, but she estimated about two days of training for assessment incorporated with the other training in the course of the year. Two days training to understand the contents and learn how to implement the ideas of a new, complex and deeply changed assessment policy is clearly inadequate. Dinzi confirmed that *it was not sufficient* (A3). Therefore she regarded it as a *crash course* (ibid). The limitations of ad hoc and discontinuous workshops have been extensively criticised (see Fullan, 2001b). It is important for training to be continuous because it provides:

[Opportunities] for teachers to consider, discuss, argue about, and work through the changes in their assumptions. Without this, the technical changes they are exposed to during the training are unlikely to make a deep lasting impact on their practice.

(Evans, 2001: 65)

This opportunity to discuss, argue and debate was unfortunately not provided to Dinzi at the training sessions. The importance of providing such an opportunity becomes even more profound in terms of Dinzi's personal and professional experience and beliefs discussed previously.

The contents of the workshop also seemed problematic because they discussed the *what and how of it, not the why* (A3). In addition when you have a problem with another lesson they didn't give you an example. Well they just tell you what to do. Full stop. It was not helpful because we were instructed what to do (ibid). Her reports illustrate that Dinzi was not provided with the opportunity to engage and interact with the ideas in the new policy to enable her to develop the deep conceptual understanding and productive learning necessary to make fundamental changes in practice. It rather encourages learning that is superficial, narrow and prescriptive. This is consistent with the claims made by Hargreaves (in Fullan, 2003: 7):

Teachers and schools in poorer communities are being subjected to a form of performance training that provides intensive implementation support but only in relation to highly prescriptive interventions.

The cascade model is not working as illustrated by Dinzi:

I think we are not properly work-shopped from the top to the down to educators. Only one or two educators have attended and they give us wrong information.

(A3).

The pedagogical inadequacy of the cascade model for teacher training has also been sharply criticised and rightly so, by the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 (Chisholm, 2000). It fails to develop the kind and quality of expertise required for the implementation of our new transformative policies because it is riddled with conceptual and practical faults, such as not modelling the basic tenets and principles of outcomes-based education, and democracy.

The timing of the training had also been problematic. As reported previously, Dinzi received most of her limited training and associated documents in 2002 for implementation in 2002. Clearly this is unacceptable and inadequate to enable Dinzi to understand a new policy with major and deep demands and implement it.

The facilitators responsible for training were not adequately prepared as reported by Dinzi:

The facilitators conducting the training did not know their work and the district officials are confused.

(A3)

This situation could only build scepticism and cynicism on the part of educators, rather than their commitment and confidence essential for change. Scepticism and cynicism can lead so easily to demoralisation and demotivation, which would be extremely difficult to restore in order to make the policy work.

The nature of the training provided described above clearly cannot be called development for deep change - development in this instance would think that development:

[Consists] of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedom is constitutive of development.

(Sen, 1999: xii, emphasis in original)

On the contrary, the training that Dinzi received adopted a myopic view of training that led to her surface understanding of the policy and non-fulfilment of its goals.

Focus on Grade 9 – exit level students

The Department of Education had exerted an unusual amount of pressure on schools with regard to Grade 9 students who would be completing their compulsory phase of schooling, if they were successful. This resulted in Dinzi focusing more attention to the Grade 9 classes than to the observed Grade 8 class. This I would argue contributed to the non-implementation of the assessment policy in this class.

During my first visits to the school I had observed a document referring to Grade 9 work as indicated in Chapter Two. The Assessment Guidelines prepared by the Department of Education (undated) targeted Grade 9 only. The training provided had been targeted at Grade 9 teachers as indicated by Dinzi:

In Grade 9 they have special training in assessment. But there is no special training for assessment in Grade 8.

(A3)

Other assessment related documents such as recording and reporting sheets were focused on Grade 9 only. I had observed Dinzi (A4, 14 August 2002) in her Grade 9 mathematics class discussing the department's requirements for portfolios for Grade 9 and she informed them:

You must keep a file for maths. The District officials and the national officials from the Department of Education will also check your files.

(A4, 14 August 2002)

On the first day of the fourth term Dinzi informed me:

This term would be very hectic because of Grade 9 portfolios and Grade 9 examinations.

(A3)

This illustrates the pressure that Dinzi experienced to focus on a grade that was to exit the specific education band, hence her focus on Grade 9 classes at the expense of her Grade 8 class.

School-based support

The observed conspicuous absence of classroom-based support from the science head of department, the principal and educational administrators, I will argue, could have contributed to Dinzi's superficial understanding and weak/non-implementation of the new assessment policy. Classroom-based support could provide what Christie (1999: 288) calls "a steady engagement at the school level". Deep learning on the job is necessary for successful change (Evans, 2001). Support is key for success (Fullan, 2001b). But support needs to be balanced with pressure for success (p.91) because "support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources (p.92). The importance of school-based support is to prevent Dinzi feeling the way she expressed below:

We are not sure whether we are doing the right thing or the wrong thing.

Our department, the senior officials must sometimes come and listen and see the problems that we are experiencing in school.

When the assessment facilitators are supposed to come and help us they don't come.

(A3)

The nature of the school-based support is essential. It should not be technically seen as a control mechanism as indicated by Dinzi:

Facilitators visit school to check if they had a school assessment policy.

Even when the people from the district come they check what is in paper not what happens in the classroom.

(A3)

Collaborative Cultures or Professional Learning Community

During my six-week observation period and consequent visits to the school I did not see any professional collaboration amongst the science teachers or other teachers. Each appeared to be working in isolation, the antithesis of a learning community

(Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992). This lack of a collaborative culture or professional learning community in the school and science department could account for Dinzi having a surface understanding of the policy and its weak implementation. This was evident at the staff meeting discussed below, the different way that Dinzi claimed she constituted her marks at the end of the year compared to that of the science head of department (discussed previously), and her fragmented understanding and practice of assessment. She was unable to see the connections between assessment in Grade 9 and Grade 8 despite both constituting the same phase. In fact she believed that there was a “Grade 9 world and a Grade 8 world” (A3). I do not blame Dinzi for this but rather the working conditions of the school that may prevent this kind of collaboration needed for deep change to occur. Researchers concur that it is the working conditions in the vast majority of schools that prevent teachers from working collaboratively (See Fullan, 2001; 60). Collaborative cultures are important because they are constantly converting tacit knowledge into shared knowledge through interaction (ibid: 47). It is also important to note:

Collaborative cultures are innovative not just because they provide support, but also because they recognise the value of dissonance inside and outside the organisation.

(Fullan, 1999b: 27).

Monitoring and evaluation

I had observed a clear lack of monitoring or evaluation mechanism in the school. This lack of an accountability system could account for Dinzi having a superficial understanding of the new policy and her weak implementation of the policy. The manifestations of this absence of monitoring was observed first, when Dinzi did not have the continuous assessment mark sheet for her Grade 8 B class at the end of the third term and it seemed to be accepted without any questions being asked by the science head of department or the deputy principals or the principal, second, when her mark sheet was not ready for moderation by the science head of department who went to mark matriculation examination papers without moderating the mark sheet in November. If monitoring did take place the situation that I witnessed in the staff meeting could have been avoided. At this staff meeting (only one held in six week period) the science head of department who was teaching one class out of the four Grade 8 Natural Science classes informed Dinzi (who taught one Grade 8 class) and

the other teacher who was teaching the other two Grade 8 Natural Science classes that the following day all four Grade 8 Natural Science classes would be writing a control test on density. The teacher who was teaching two Grade 8 classes responded that he had not taught density but another section, namely ‘matter, atoms and molecules’. The science head of department decided that her class and Dinzi’s class would write the control test, and the other two classes would write the test in the following term. We are reminded and I agree:

The profession must have a clear and effective arrangement for accountability and for measuring performance and outcome.

(Fullan, 2003:10)

This monitoring and evaluation or accountability could be viewed as pressure that is both positive and essential for opposing the forces that maintain the status quo. For change to be successful both pressure and support are required because “pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation” (Fullan, 2001b: 91).

Monitoring and evaluation is a built in attempt to learn and improve as you go, an essential requirement for successful change.

Ambivalence

Dinzi’s response to the new assessment policy was ambivalent. On the one hand she felt that the new methods of assessment proposed by the new policy:

Quite advantageous because you don’t have to stay for the whole month, to give a test. ...You were able to pick up very quickly if they don’t understand.

Well firstly I noticed it was exciting for the students, for me as well. Well if it is exciting for the students then they put more effort into doing it. Then it is easier for them to learn about whatever you are teaching them.

(A3)

Her optimism towards the new policy is backed by her assertion “we need to be positive” (ibid). On the other hand she asserted:

It was not much change; just new terms...I don’t know where they did their research to find that. I think we’re doing what we’ve been doing all along.

(A3)

This demonstrates a sense of negativity or resistance towards the policy.

She also reported on the one hand that she changed as a result of the policy, but on the other hand she reported that her role as a teacher did not change.

This ambivalence and ambiguity or duality of meanings makes it difficult to ascertain whether Dinzi was resistant to the new policy per se or not. I did not experience any overt resistance on her part but if there are covert forms of resistance I shall respect and attend to it as a necessary part of the change process. I adopt this stance because I agree:

[Any] transition engenders mixed feelings. Understanding these feelings is vital to the successful implementation of change.

(Evans, 2001: 26)

Furthermore Maurer (in Fullan, 2003: 22) observed:

*Resistance is an essential ingredient of success.
Often those who resist have something important to tell us.
...They may understand problems about the minutiae of implementation that we never see from the lofty perch atop Mount Olympus.*

This ambivalence could have contributed to her surface understanding of the policy and its non-implementation.

I now explain why Teacher Hayley implemented assessment in ways that I had observed.

Why Teacher Hayley Implemented the Assessment Policy in the way observed?

This case study revealed that Hayley had a surface understanding of the new official policy on assessment, that she had both positive and negative beliefs about the policy although more negative than positive, and that some of her assessment practices were linked to the official policy on assessment while others were not. These findings invoke the question: Why? I respond to this question by constructing the analytical links in my explanation by drawing on the empirical evidence from the study and on theoretical evidence from the conceptual framework of deep change.

I identified similar factors to those identified for Dinzi in Hayley's case. These are: Hayley's personal and professional characteristics, beliefs about the policy, the school context, nature of policy introduction, knowledge and skills, policy conflicts and collisions, nature of the training, focus on exit level examinations, school-based support, collaborative cultures/Professional learning communities, monitoring and evaluation, and ambivalence. These factors function interactively and in combination to determine the successful implementation of the policy.

Hayley's personal and professional characteristics

Her age (28 years) indicates that she would have had about sixteen years of experience in education driven by the principles of Christian Fundamental Pedagogics. There is quite a vast literature on this subject and I shall not dwell on this except to emphasise that it valued the uncritical use behavioural objectives and encouraged the use textbooks as the most important guide to teaching. It promoted didactic teaching and learning. Of her five and half years teaching experience, four years have been in the old system and one and half in both the old and new. The past patterned social forces could influence her way of thinking and behaving. She thus could possess her own cherished cultural ideals about education, and a general philosophy underlying this adulation of traditionalist teaching, learning and assessment. She may invariably invoke her ideas of practice and use her past experiential reasoning in deciding how to assess. And now she is expected to make this huge, deep shift to a new system that is driven by outcomes, a concept she has a surface understanding of, expecting her to use 'learning programme', a concept of which she has limited understanding, and to become a 'facilitator', a concept of which she also claimed to have no idea. It seems clear that under such conditions she would resort to her past knowledge and practices that provided her with the security and certainty she so desires. In fact her observed reliance and her reported use of the textbook is a stark reflection of her resorting to the comfort of her past practice. She attests to this:

I found my way to do it and to still survive with all this.

(B3)

I am in no way slighting Hayley for this but believe it is the short sightedness, misguided assumptions, and/or misconceptions of the policy makers and education administrators who did not provide her the kind of support and professional development so essential for making the kind of deep changes demanded by the policy. I therefore argue that it is the security and certainty of her past experiences, acts that are normal and understandable (see Evans, 2001), coupled with a lack of appropriate support and professional development, topics I pursue later in this section that could account for the disconnection between her assessment practice and the policy.

Another example that illustrates her reliance in her past tried and tested activities is her report that she uses the criteria of the matriculation Biology syllabus to set the question paper for June and November examination question papers (3 December 2002). The matriculation examination is not driven by outcomes but rather by objectives. The power of the past reliance on the use of objectives had also been demonstrated in her preparation file discussed earlier. She also relies on using marking memoranda, a dominant practice of the past, to assess her students' work.

She is one who respects authority and therefore does not challenge the principal or management (personal communication, 23 August 2002). This is a reflection of her past where a submissive and compliant posture by teachers was promoted and encouraged. This posture would not enable a teacher to take risks, or to disrupt the status quo, fundamentals required to fulfil the policy demands.

Her first language is not English. This could account for her lack of understanding of the policy. This is reflected in her report: *I don't understand the English so well* (B3). It seems obvious that if she cannot understand the language in which the policy is written she would lack clarity about its meaning and goals. Being clear about a reform is a fundamental requirement for successful implementation (Fullan, 2001b). The changes that the new assessment policy expects of teachers are complex and therefore understanding its contents is crucial for its successful implementation. It is therefore likely that Hayley's difficulty in understanding the new assessment policy, which is written in English, could account for her lack of deep understanding of the assessment policy and its subsequent superficial implementation. I should add that

despite this shortcoming, Hayley tried to implement some of the new assessment practices, such as portfolio assessment.

I believe that this power of the past is unlikely to be washed away by policy. The conservative impulse and the cumulative impact of culture and past learning are too strong to permit change by policy alone. I am in no way suggesting that change is not possible; I am suggesting that the kind of initiatives required to disrupt established patterns of thought and behaviour of teachers, or the status quo if you like, would require systemic and sustained efforts yet to be developed for the desired policy goals to be realised at the level of the classroom. I shall also argue that there were many factors that could account for those times where she was able to satisfy the policy requirements, for example assessing continuously, as well as assessing tests, assignments, practical work, and projects (although with some limitations). First because of her race, being white she had the privilege of attending schools where such work was expected of her as a student as she reported:

I remember what my teachers did ...and actually lots of things that I do, I still go on what I remember on what they did.

(B3)

Also as a white teacher in a white school this was expected as she had indicated during the interview: “*I have always done it with all my grades*” (B3), so these activities were not totally new to her though the fundamental philosophies and principles were now different. Second she was in a school where resources were not a problem. She did not mention resource constraints at all in any interview, and neither did I observe such constraints. In fact her lessons are conducted in a large, well-resourced laboratory, she is assisted by a laboratory assistant, as well as an assistant to make copies of worksheets, and an assistant to complete the administrative side of recording her marks. Third she is committed to her work. This assertion is based on my observations: all her work such as worksheets and marking was always complete, her lessons always started on time, she supported students during the breaks and after school, and staying in to prepare lessons. A further illustration of her commitment to teaching was demonstrated when I went to the school on the last day of the fourth term, when students and most teachers had left, Hayley remained in school to prepare her work for the following year since she had been informed what classes she would be teaching the following year (3 December 2002). It is this commitment that I

believe contributes not only to her being very organised, disciplined and generally well prepared for her lessons, but to her trying to change as reflected in her report:

What I am doing at the moment I am taking a piece of work and I am trying to see how many different other methods of assessment can I fit in here, is of such a nature that I can actually use another way of measurement.

(B3)

Beliefs about the policy

The role of beliefs cannot but be crucial for understanding and implementing policy. Her beliefs or attitudes described previously reflect her deep negativism towards the policy and that is summarised cogently by her:

To be honest the assessment for me is a nightmare. Some of the methods are totally ridiculous.

(B3)

Changes in beliefs are very difficult because they challenge the core values held by people regarding educational change (Fullan, 2001b). While beliefs are generally not made explicit or discussed, Hayley was forthright about how she felt about the new assessment policy. Such deep negative emotional effects may not encourage a teacher to make efforts to understand and implement the policy. And it was seen that the teacher merely files the policy related documents away without any serious attempts at discussing it with other teachers to make sense of them. These deep negative beliefs or attitude could also account for the lack of deep understanding about the policy and its superficial implementation.

But I should add that despite the negative feelings, Hayley tried to implement the policy in some ways described earlier. I think that might be due to many reasons, such as, her commitment to teaching that I have discussed earlier; her entry into the teaching career in 1997 when the drums of change generally and outcomes-based education specifically was so loud, she could have expected change; the supportive role of the principal who she reported she respected for the support she provided, and her faith in God who she reported provided her the strength to go on teaching. In fact she reported that she and a group of teachers in the school prayed regularly in a

classroom as a way to cope with the stresses of teaching (personal communication, August 2002). I had observed the teachers praying during my visits to the school.

The school context

The school context plays a crucial role in policy implementation because it provides a world of conditional possibilities and impossibilities to teachers.

The school's executive make decisions without providing reasons for the decisions except to instruct them to follow the decisions, for example the cases given previously regarding the instruction by the head of department for Hayley to reduce her continuous assessment marks; the other example is when the school executive instructed teachers to use specific ratios for the December mark sheet, and yet another was when teachers were instructed to use comments on students' reports from a list provided by the school's executive. This traditional management style may be inconsistent with the new thinking on management that would encourage and support teachers to explore new ways of teaching, learning and assessing. This traditional management style may likely promote and value traditional norms and mores. A traditional environment may promote traditional pedagogical practices, rather than the new pedagogical practices demanded from new policies. This traditional school management environment could account for weak implementation of the policy.

With regard to the students in her class, Hayley reported that:

Learners have attitudes towards tasks, many they just don't care and not motivated.

(B1)

They keep jumping up and flying in one another's hair. How on earth am I going to have class in front of me and trying to assess a debate?

(B3)

Hayley also reported that students experience problems related to language. Their first language is not English and this affects the new assessment practice. I believe that policy makers make assumptions about learner attitude, values, competencies and behaviour with regard to implementing the new policy and these assumptions need to be challenged. The demands made by a variegated student population, and learner

ability, attitude and behaviour would account for Hayley's inability to achieve many of the goals of the new assessment policy.

Tests are written every Wednesdays reflecting the 'testing culture' in the school. Hayley reported that the reasons for these tests were to ensure that *children are continuously busy with the work* and to prepare students for examinations because there is still a strong examination system prevailing (B3). However she tries to combine the old system focusing on content with the new system focusing on skills but in the tests:

It tests someone's theoretical knowledge. You can get a normal test, you study this and you give it back like in the old way.

(B3)

This testing culture reinforces the traditional pedagogy that ill serves the new assessment system. Hence it could account for the weak implementation of the new assessment policy that requires less emphasis on tests and rote learning and teaching.

The added demands placed upon Hayley would add to her weak implementation of the policy, for example the school has a 'double assessment system' as reported by Hayley:

So we are going at the moment on two paths.

(B3)

The two systems are:

All the worksheets and the practicals and the projects and assignment still goes on, and then we have a special portfolio project and assignment and worksheet.

(B3)

She complained:

It puts a big load on the teacher if you are assessing all the time and marking all the time.

(B3)

Hayley bemoaned the lack of time to implement the new assessment policy. She complained that she did not have sufficient time to:

[See] the learners long enough. Have to still teach all my other grades and do extracurricular duties. I can't master content of all the different documents I receive. Not enough time to develop materials fully.

(B1)

The overloaded demands placed on Hayley resulted in insufficient time for her to respond to the added demands of the new assessment policy. This could contribute to the weak implementation of the policy. Shortage of time repeatedly appears as one of the chief implementation problems (see Hargreaves 1994). Scarcity of time makes it difficult for teachers to plan more thoroughly, to commit themselves to the effort of the innovation, to work collaboratively with colleagues, or to reflect on their practice (p. 15). How much time teachers get away from classroom duties to work collaboratively with colleagues, or to reflect individually is a vital issue for matters of educational change (p.15). Policymakers may have overlooked or underestimated the extra time that would be required by teachers to respond to the new assessment policy. This is because:

Teachers and administrators perceive time in teaching and change very differently. These differences are rooted in how teachers and administrators respectively are located in relation to the structure of teachers' work. And they ... can lead to profound misunderstandings and struggles about teaching, change and time...

(p. 15)

Hargreaves (p.16) uses the “intensification thesis: to explain that “teaching is becoming more compressed with worrying consequences”. The consequence could be seen in this case that Hayley was unable to implement the new assessment policy at a deep level because of the time constraints imposed by education policymakers and administrators. This is to say that having good ideas is not good enough, policymakers need also to take cognizance of the “implementation dip”, that is, “a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and understandings” (Fullan, 2001a: 40).

Those times when Hayley was able to link her assessment practice somewhat with the new assessment policy was probably due to the evaluation system of teachers in the school, as well as the strict disciplinary rules that were consistently enforced in the school, for example, there was an internal system of evaluating teachers by the head of department of a specific subject discipline. The head of department would administer a set of prepared questions, accepted by the staff, orally to the students. The students had to respond by a show of hands after the head of department read each questions aloud. After analyzing the responses, the head of department and the teacher concerned would meet to discuss the findings. The purpose was developmental (personal communication with the principal). The observed culture of discipline in the school was most impressive. The internal evaluation system and the culture of discipline could have contributed to the establishment of conditions conducive to implementing certain aspects of the new assessment practices by Hayley.

Nature of introducing policy and related documents

The way Hayley received the new policy and other documents related to the new system of assessment, I argue, may possibly also accounted for her surface understanding of the policy and consequently its weak implementation.

Hayley reported that she received the policy and related documents mostly through her pigeonhole in the staff room, or given to her by the head of department without discussing it. This surely is no way of introducing a policy that theoretically and conceptually departs deeply from the past. It would be difficult as reflected by Hayley:

It is a lot of thinking. It doesn't come naturally because none of us was brought up in this way.

(B3)

It is seems clear that the way the policymakers and educational administrators approached the implementation of the policy was problematic as reflected by the teacher:

The way the department has approached OBE with the teachers, there's lots of teachers that left teaching because of the way it was dealt with.

(B3)

She also added:

I've got two of these thick files full of different types of documents and things they suggest and then they suggest it differently but I really don't know what to use anymore. So I'm really doing at this point in time what I think in my brain. I now make my own things....

(B3)

Documents make me feel overwhelmed. Too much information in a short space of time, don't know which one to use. It is easier if one document came; we master it and in a years time another one.

(Personal communication, 19 July 2002)

This clearly illustrates that the way she received these documents force her to resort to her old ways of assessing and this accounts for her lack of deep understanding of the policy and its non-implementation.

In August 2002 while I was in the chemical room of the laboratory with Hayley, we observed a document titled "Curriculum 2005: Assessment Guidelines: Natural Science: Senior Phase from the Department of Education but it was undated. Hayley reported that this was the first time she has seen this document and that by default. However she reported that another Grade 9 teacher had told her that she had heard about this document from her friend of another school. But since the school did not have the document she did not pursue the matter. This method of 'hearing' information about policy is further illustrated by Hayley:

So basically what I am doing is all these things that I have heard somewhere along the line.

(B3)

This further illustrates the faulty way of teachers' contact with the policy related documents.

Added to this is her 'hearing' about the revised curriculum policy:

I think they are reducing the specific outcomes for each learning area in a revised one that is only going to be implemented later on.

(B3)

It seems clear that the nature of introducing the policy to Hayley by policy makers did not provide her with the substantial opportunities to learn the practices proposed by the new assessment policy, a fundamental condition for successful educational reform (see Cohen and Hill, 2001), and it prevented her from challenging her acceptance of and comfort with the status quo, that is persuading her why it is necessary to change (see Evans, 2001). It is illusory to think that policy will be read and understood once it reaches the teacher's hand. It is equally illusory to think that teachers would build commitment to the reform because they have received it from higher authorities. Those claims seem quite unjustified and reflect the breathtaking simplicity of rational choice thinking by policy makers and education administrators. I argue that this unswerving consistency of brutal and theoretically obtuse procedures of introducing teachers to a reformed policy would clearly contribute to their superficial understanding of it and consequently its lack of implementation.

Knowledge and skills

In the section described previously I described Hayley's lack of knowledge of fundamental concepts such as critical outcomes, assessment criteria, criterion-referenced, underpinning the policy as described earlier. She also reported:

I have no idea how to link the SOs with the content

(Personal communication, 23 July 2002)

Don't know how to manage portfolio files

(Personal communication, 23 July 2002)

Don't know how to record information in a useful manner

(Personal communication, 23 July 2002)

This lack of knowledge I would argue contributed to the weak implementation of the policy. She confirmed:

I still don't know how to do that. My own knowledge maybe wasn't big enough.

(B3)

She reported her role has changed in that she has *lots of paper work* (B3). This clearly illustrates her lack of conceptual knowledge about the policy except in the technical and administrative domain. In fact she admitted:

It is a very administrative thing at the end of the day.

(B3)

Hayley also complained that she lacked the skills to record marks in the new way expected, and to assess attitudes and values (personal communication, 23 August 2002). Knowledge and skills is related to capacity to understand and implement the policy. Hayley reported that she did not have the capacity to implement the policy because:

We are overwhelmed with the amount of work to be done. To add more will be fatal.

(B1)

The importance of building the capacity for change and development at both the classroom and school levels has also been underscored by Harris (2003). Successful implementation of change also requires teachers to move from old knowledge and skills to new competence and capabilities. And when the scope and sophistication of such change go far beyond minor modifications, that is, they seek deep changes, the transition is especially challenging for teachers (see Evans, 2001). I argue that this lack of knowledge and skills, or capacity, may account for her surface understanding of the policy and its weak and/or lack of implementation.

Conflicting demands by the educational administrators

As indicated for Dinzi above, the same conflicting demands were made on Hayley with regard to the various documents. Her response to this was:

I was saying to the teacher next to me: 'I can't believe that everything ends like this'. It actually feels like why did, we do all of this, this year; you have all these forms and SOs and ACs and all of that, here we end up with an 'A' or an 'O' and it's as if it⁴ never happened.

(B3)

⁴ Meaning assessment as she practised including continuous assessment

This conflicting demands made by different documents from higher authorities could cause confusion and dissonance in Hayley's mind, preventing her from seeing any coherence in the assessment system. The importance of coherence is regarded as crucial for successful policy implementation initiatives (see Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2001a, 2001b, Hargreaves, 1994). The conflicting demands and lack of coherence amongst the various assessment related documents could have contributed to Hayley's surface understanding of the assessment policy and its less than optimal implementation.

Policy conflicts and collisions

The confusion caused by the two different educational systems working simultaneously is a factor that may also account for Hayley's surface understanding of the policy and its weak implementation. For example the requirements for Grade 12 driven by NATED 550, is different from the requirement for Grades 8 and 9 driven by outcomes-based education. Hayley illustrated this:

So there is lots of contradictions at the moment because they said for portfolios the child (grade 8 and 9) must choose their best.... In matric we use all the things that they did the whole year.

(B3)

Hayley reported that she uses group work in her class and does have:

[A] bigger picture of the child that I can see but I'm not writing it down anywhere because the report that the department at the end of the day wants, there's no space to write any of that down.

(B3)

This illustrates conflicting requirements by the department of education. This conflicting demand could account for her surface understanding of the assessment policy and her superficial implementation of the new policy.

She also reported that she received so many different documents:

Every time it was something different. I get confused.

(B3)

Another source of confusion was when the department changed their requirement regarding levels of achievement from 1 to 5 they originally requested to 1 to 4 (personal communication, 26 November 2003). An added source of her confusion came from the educational administrators. They instructed teachers to indicate only levels achieved by students in students' report cards, in contradiction to continuous assessment model. For example the "Summative Record Sheet" from the provincial department of education, required Hayley to indicate students progress by indicating whether students had "achieved, partly achieved, not achieved" the specific outcomes and assessment criteria using specific keys (personal communication, December 2002). The school on the other hand required the use of specific outcomes and continuous assessment, while parents wanted to see percentages. The changing requirement expected by the education administrators is captured in her report:

Interestingly suddenly the department wants portfolios for grade 9's that contains no assessment of SO's but just % for different activities.

(B2)

This multiple and varied demands, with conflicting ideas could have added to her confusion and resulted in weak/lack of implementation of the policy. It seems that educational administrators see this method as a pure time-maximisation process, which leaves out much reach for the fulfilment of the new assessment policy goals.

Nature of training

I believe that how teachers are prepared/trained can be particularly crucial for the cogency and reach of policy goals. Therefore the nature of the training received would definitely account for her surface understanding of the policy and its consequential weak/non-implementation. All her reports on the nature of training, in terms of timing, time, content, size of groups of teachers, approach and competencies of the facilitators leave much to be desired in terms of achieving the fundamental goals of the policy.

Hayley reported:

Training was not covering assessment in detail, maybe seven minutes was spent on it.

(B2)

She added:

Our training wasn't sufficient enough. I wasn't trained properly. None of them was specifically on assessment.

(B3)

The miniscule time spent on training on assessment is not only insufficient, but absurd to expect teachers to learn the new and deep meanings embedded in the reformed policy.

The content of the training sessions were also problematic. Hayley complained:

Just theory, no modelling new assessment practices of assessment. We sit and listen and I have forgotten.

(B3)

Subverting the views of teachers is a grave mistake. I would like to underscore the point that the underlying constructs of policy may be invested with diverse meanings, that is official policy may acquire multiple meanings in daily practice. The fact that discussions were reportedly absent during the training demonstrates that diverse meanings were not elicited, encouraged and interrogated, a process so fundamental in a multilingual society. I would see it as a practice of silencing teacher deliberations, which undermine open and free debate so fundamental for shared understandings and examination of policy assumptions. This approach reflects not only the lack of a foundational understanding by the facilitators about how teachers learn and change but also their hostility to pedagogical engagement. The nature of training is seemingly the enemy of principles of outcomes-based education and reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of its principles. They also obviously did not pay special attention to create conditions for informed understanding and enlightened discussion, an approach whose central idea is that of the teacher as an active participant in change, rather than a passive and docile recipient of instruction. I believe that there is a strong need for policy makers and educational administrators to go beyond this rather limited and

circumscribed role of teachers in understanding development of teachers towards policy and educational change.

The timing of the training seemed problematic. For example Haley reported that she was orientated to 'portfolio assessment' for the first time in February or March 2002 (she could not remember) while portfolios were supposed to be implemented in 2001 in Grade 8. Hayley was the moderator for Grade 9 work including assessment. Obviously with just an orientation to a method of assessment that was totally new could only but contribute to a surface understanding of it, and its poor implementation.

She also complained that the facilitators at the training workshops did not know their work because they could not provide answers to questions posed by teachers since:

They were just trained to do this by someone else. Lots of the people there don't have the background.

(B3)

This illustrates first, the use of the cascade model of training, one so deeply limited that it has come under wide criticism (see Chisholm, 2000); second, the facilitators are incompetent.

Hayley reported that how she assessed some activities this year was different to the previous year because:

I think you learn as you go along what works and what does not work

(B3)

This experience from classroom and school practice is seemingly ignored at the training workshops where information and instructions are handed out. Many scholars have critiqued this traditional paradigm of teacher development or 'training' or workshops and suggested different more promising approaches to professional development of teachers (see Ball & Cohen, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Harris, 2003; Hiebert, et al, 2002; Kirtman, 2002; Leat, 1999; McKenzie, 2001; Smyth, 1998).

Focus on exit level examinations

I will argue that the focus of the teacher on the exit level examinations, namely grade 9 and grade 12 would compromise her deep understanding of the policy and its effective implementation. Hayley confirmed this when she reported that she was focusing on moderating the Grade 9 portfolios and “*pay more attention to grade 10 but particularly to grade 12* (personal communication, August 2002).

The fact that only teachers of Grade 9 were given orientation/training for assessment and especially portfolio assessment in 2002 (personal communication, August 2002) is a clear reflection of the focus on exit level grades and examinations. During my visits to the school in July to September 2002 I had observed the Grade 9 teachers in frenzy, literally, regarding the Grade 9 requirement for portfolios and ‘common tasks of assessment’ from the education department. Even Hayley’s attention had moved towards the Grade 9 portfolios that she was moderating.

Hayley reported that when she enquired from the OBE coordinator of the school what the department of education requires of her for Grade 8, the OBE coordinator responded:

There is nothing definite they want from us for grade 8.
(B3)

This illustrates how grades where exit examinations are not written are marginalized.

Classroom-based support

During my visits to the school there was a conspicuous absence of classroom-based support, either from the other science teachers, the school management team, or educational administrators. This classroom-based support I believe is crucial; especially for the implementation of an ambitious new policy like the assessment policy. Hayley reported that she gets no support regarding implementing the policy in school. She complained:

They just give us circulars. There was no other support.
(B3).

It is this lack of classroom support that contributes to Hayley's difficulty in using specific outcomes as intended by the policy. She reported:

To determine which SO I'm doing at the moment is very difficult. At the end of the day I guess, yes, let's make this SO1.
(B3, emphasis added)

I argue that it is this lack of classroom-based support that accounted to her surface understanding of the policy and its weak/lack of implementation.

Collaborative cultures/Professional learning communities

The importance of a collaborative culture in learning or professional learning cultures is well documented (see Fullan, 2001a, 2001b; Hall et al., 2001; Hargreaves, 1994, 2004). During my twenty-week observation period and consequent visits to the school I did not see Hayley collaborating professionally amongst the science teachers, or other teachers. What I did observe was a very negative 'OBE facilitator' who had been nominated by the school to attend 'OBE meetings', dishing out information, or/and documents, or/and instructions to the teachers in the staff room. This was returned with an equally visible and audible negative response. I observed Hayley usually working alone in her classroom and 'gave' her worksheets to the other science teachers to use. I did not observe them discussing the work professionally. I do not blame Hayley for this, but rather the working conditions she is exposed to that provide her with no time to collaborate with other teachers.

Hayley's report is evidence of her individualist working culture:

[To] try and get assessment in different ways and develop it by yourself, that is tough.
(B3, emphasis added)

She also confirmed:

I don't have a lot of contact with them. We haven't shared.
(B3)

This lack of a collaborative culture of learning or professional learning community in the school could account for Hayley's surface understanding of the policy and its weak/lack of implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation

With the exception of the evaluation of the teacher by the head of department one day in the year, a process that I believe is flawed anyway, (questions are read aloud very fast because it has to be complete in thirty minutes, and students respond by show of hands, it is counted, analysed and report made on teacher) there was a clear absence of any monitoring or evaluation mechanism in the school. I will argue that this lack of an accountability system in the school contributed to Hayley's superficial understanding of the policy and its weak implementation. An accountability system is crucial for addressing issues such as reported by the OBE facilitator that no student should get level 1 or 2, because that would reflect the inefficiency of the teacher. If this were the case then teachers would just shower students with levels 3, 4 and 5, not an indication of authentic student achievement but of teacher efficiency. And this is highly likely in the current climate where students work is not moderated save the mark, not how the mark was arrived at. Thus monitoring is critical in view of Hayley's remark:

Some people will make the story up. It is too easy to just put a cross on a block

(B3)

The crucial importance of monitoring and evaluation becomes more important in the context of the following report by Hayley:

The HOD was very much a statistician. The mark sheets had to have an average.

(B3)

This type of mechanical and technical moderation would compromise the implementation of the new policy that is criterion-referenced rather than norm referenced.

Hayley reported that the OBE facilitator in the school responded to her assessment query:

You do what you do.

(B3)

If this is the case I believe the goals of the policy will not be achieved, therefore monitoring is critical.

Monitoring and evaluation must be seen in the context of Hayley's concerns:

The whole time it feels like as if you are not doing your job properly. Now you might do what you think is correct because you don't actually know what you are supposed to do

(B3)

A lack of a monitoring and evaluation system shows an over-reliance on individual conduct, and leaves spaces or openings for actions that could conflict with the goals of the policy. An effective monitoring system could avoid deliberate inaction so that the desired policy change is induced and achieved. Hall et al (2001) make a similar argument for the importance of monitoring implementation because they argue "the change journey is not without bumps and detours" (p.111). Monitoring is important because data gathered during implementation could be analysed, interpreted carefully and used to guide subsequent interventions (p.112).

Ambivalence

I find it difficult to determine whether she was resistant to the policy or not. In fact I think she was ambivalent because she reported that the policy was both *good and bad*. (B3). She reported that the policy is good because it enabled her to:

Get to know the child better, more holistic manner, and give weaker child creative ways, not only black and white on paper.

(Personal communication, December 2002)

She said that the new policy:

Help learners to be more creative and to think more for themselves. So I think that's a big advantage.

Continuous assessment is very good because it is unfair that only big tests and exams are used to evaluate.

(B3)

On the other hand she had negative feeling towards the policy as well as described earlier. She also reported that she changed as the result of the policy. But the reason for her change reflects a compulsion to change rather than a personal and professional attraction towards the policy. This lack of ownership towards the policy is reflected by her comment on why she changed:

[That] is what they expect of me; if I want to have a job I will need to change with the system.

B3)

This ambivalence and lack of ownership could account for her surface understanding of the policy and its weak/non-implementation.

I now attempt to provide an explanation for why there are differences between the observed practices between Dinzi and Hayley.

Why does Dinzi and Hayley assess differently?

A conspicuous difference in their observed assessment practice was that Hayley used a variety of ways to assess her students, such as assessing their worksheets completed in class, assignments, projects and portfolios, as well as tests and examinations; she also used rubrics to assess some tasks, and developed new forms to record students' assessment marks. Her record sheet indicated all the various types of assessed activities for each student from the beginning of the year, and these marks corresponded with the students' records. Dinzi on the other hand used only test and examinations as a method of assessment, did not use rubrics to assess the learners, she did not have a record sheet to indicate students' marks from the beginning of the year, but produced one at the end of the year just indicating marks but how the marks were arrived at was not indicated, and no evidence of assessed student work. The question this raises is about the reasons for the differences, which I explain below.

Understandings and beliefs

Both Dinzi and Hayley held surface understandings of the policy, and both had mixed beliefs about the policy, although in both cases there were more negative beliefs about the policy, for example both believed that the training associated with the policy was insufficient. I wish to argue that it was the collective effect of the surface understanding and mixed beliefs about the policy could account for the weak link between their assessment practice and the assessment policy.

Personal and profession factors

The differences in their personal and professional characteristics could offer a possible explanation for their different understandings and beliefs and their differences in assessment practices.

Dinzi is Black, who studied in a Black school, college of education and university, all governed by the Bantu Education System, the weaknesses of which have been well documented. She began teaching in and is still teaching in the same Black township school. The combined experience of being schooled in a weak system for sixteen years and teaching in a township school for fifteen years would possibly make it very hard for Dinzi to shift from the traditional educational practice dominated by behaviourist psychology and fundamental pedagogics to a radically new system driven by outcomes. The effort, energy and time that Dinzi has to make would be enormous to narrow if not eliminate the pedagogical gap created between her experience of education and the new educational system. Whereas for Hayley, being White, and schooled in the White system of education with the perceived advantages, change would be easier because the pedagogical gap between her educational experience and the new educational system would be narrower. In fact Hayley indicated that while she was studying to become a teacher in 1996, she had been prepared by her lecturer to teach in a way that challenged the traditional norms, although it as not labelled OBE. She stated:

The whole way I was taught in my diploma to become a teacher in HED⁵, my lecturer was totally OBE based, although he didn't call it OBE. At that point he was just talking about 'maximizing a student's potential' and you know let them think more and do all these learning activities; you're a facilitator of the learning activities. I was never trained in how to teach in the old way.

(B3)

This teacher preparation programme would clearly place Hayley at an advantage compared to Dinzi in making the change towards outcomes based education.

⁵ Higher Education Diploma

Contextual factors

There is clearly a contextual gap between the two teachers. Hayley is teaching in an attractive, well-resourced school, situated in an urban area that is middle class with mostly middle class students, she teaches thirty three Grade 8 Natural Science students in a well-resourced laboratory, and she and her students have new textbooks, while Dinzi on the other hand is teaching in a drab, under-resourced school situated in a township characterised by socio-economic deprivation, she teaches fifty Grade 8 Natural Science students in a small classroom, and she and her students do not have new textbooks. The contextual advantage that Hayley has over Dinzi is clear, and therefore could account for the differences in their assessment practices. It is a combination of the personal and professional gap and the contextual gap where Hayley seems to be at an advantage that enabled Hayley to make some shifts in her assessment practice in line with the new policy while Dinzi's assessment practice seemed untouched by the new policy initiative, despite the fact that Dinzi is in her second year of study towards a Further Certificate in Outcomes-Based Education, while Hayley I not engaged in any formal studies.

I next attempt to construct analytic links between the data or findings from this study and the theory on deep change.

COMPARING THE THEORY WITH THE DATA

In this section I shall examine the data and the propositions I make in this study within the context of the conceptual framework of deep change described earlier in order to understand the linkages/no linkages between the theory and the data. This analytical engagement should enable me to hold up the three propositions about change for theoretical interrogation, and gain new insights into the relationship between macro-level policies and micro-level practice.

Understandings and practice

I will examine and explain specifically the two teachers' understandings of the policy. By their own admission each conceded that they do not have deep understandings of the policy. I repeat it here as a matter of emphasis. Dinzi conceded:

I am not conversant about the basics. I cannot really get deep into it. I don't have deep knowledge about it as such.

(A3)

And Hayley admitted:

I do not understand everything in these documents. I have got all this information; I am not detailed so much in the sense of ideas.

(B3)

This means that each has a superficial understanding of the policy, rather than the deep, sophisticated meaning of the policy. According to the conceptual framework on deep change a relational link exists between the surface understanding of the policy and the kind of change that teachers make in their practice. That means that each teacher may change only the surface features of their behaviour in the classroom. This change in the surface features of each teacher's behaviour in the classroom found expression when I observed each teacher conducting the practical lesson described earlier. Each teacher had students working in groups, but no assessment took place. This activity provided the opportunity for peer assessment to take place but the teachers did not or could not capitalise on the opportunity. This possibly could be ascribed to the superficial understanding of the policy. Peer assessment is a new pedagogical activity and was not part of teachers past traditional assessment repertoire; hence it could be seen as an example of deep change embodied as the new theory of education implicit in the new policy. In order to achieve this deep change in practice, a deep understanding should precede the assessment practice. The point I want to make here is that here are two teachers with completely different personal, professional and contextual backgrounds but they cohere in possessing similar superficial understanding of the policy. This raises a fundamental question for the successful implementation of the policy, that is, why do these two different teachers have a superficial understanding of the new assessment policy? The reasons may be many and varied. One, revealed by the study, could be the manner in which each

teacher received the new policy. As indicated earlier, Dinzi received the new assessment policy at a meeting, but it was not discussed and Hayley received it in her pigeonhole in the school staff room and the policy was not discussed as well. This approach which I call the ‘posting model’ and Hargreaves (2004) calls the ‘wheelbarrow’ model could possibly account for their surface understanding of the policy and consequently its superficial or non-implementation. This ‘posting’ model points to some assumptions policymakers make, first, maybe they assume that a direct relationship exists between the possession of the policy by teachers and its deep understanding and consequent implementation. In other words, their theory of change would read like this: if they (policymakers) have posted the policy to the teachers then the policy would be read, understood and implemented. In adopting this view policymakers may have overlooked the notion that teachers need to first understand the policy and construct deep meanings of the policy before implementation. The findings from this study show that this deep understanding of the policy did not occur, thereby highlighting the weakness of the assumption and the theory of change of the policy makers. It seems that policy makers clearly overlooked the importance of the teachers actively engaging with the contents of the policy in order to construct meanings from their personal, professional, political, economical and social standpoints. The approach adopted by the policy makers of ‘posting/sending’ policy documents may have been politically and economically expedient but their assumptions that teachers would read and construct deep meanings of the policy process seems flawed. By political and economic expediency I mean a belief that policy makers may hold that since they have posted the policy to teachers the responsibility of policy makers’ ends there. In fact the same process of ‘posting’ is being adopted with the current Revised National Curriculum Statement where the ‘package/box’ containing the policy documents have been posted to each school for every teacher in the education system. This further reflects the confidence that policy makers have in this process of posting policy documents to teachers for them to implement. Another assumption could be that policymakers at the national level may assume that the provincial officials would provide opportunities for discussion and sense-making of the policy, while the provincial authorities in turn may assume that the district officials would provide the opportunity, and the district officials in turn may assume that the principal of the school would provide the opportunities for discussions. And none of this happened in the two case studies, showing that

assumption to be flawed, and their approach theoretically unfounded. This approach of posting could possibly be seen to signify that the intent of the policy makers was only to ensure that all schools and teachers possessed the policy thus satisfying the equity issue, but not necessarily the understanding of the policy by teachers, since that may not have been the intention of the policymakers. It is no wonder that the two teachers did not have the deep understanding necessary to implement the policy. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to deeply understand a policy that is philosophically, epistemologically and pedagogically different from their past experiences, on the basis of merely possessing the policy, especially in the context where the language capital of the teachers is not the same as that of the policymakers. English is the second language of both teachers in this case study. Teachers cannot simply be seen as recipients of the policy in this manner, but they must be seen as active policy partners in the process of change; they must be provided with opportunities to discuss the contents of the new policy, challenging their own understandings, ideas, beliefs and assumptions, and challenging themselves to rethink their teaching and assessment practice, and thereby developing a deep understanding of the reform. The teachers had not been given the opportunity to get involved in open, reflective dialogue about why they should assess differently, about what it meant to assess differently as professionals, to take professional responsibility and to have the pedagogical power to act – in other words they were not provided with the opportunity to become agents of change but instead were seen by policymakers as targets for change. This ‘posting’ of policy orientation of the policy makers may also reflect the hierarchical relationship between policy makers and teachers, where teachers are seen as peripheral to the policy change process, and may also reflect a dichotomous view between policy and practice, thus making it difficult for policymakers and teachers to work together in developing a shared and deep meaning of the policy that could end up in teachers’ showing ownership, commitment and confidence towards the policy, factors that are fundamental for the successful implementation of policy. This method of communication, of posting the policy to teachers could reflect a view of policy makers that Marris (1975, in Fullan, 1993:23) states well:

They express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes for their purposes, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them, perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conception.

If they do not deeply understand the policy teachers may not be able to call on it as a source of authority to guide their decision-making as far as assessment is concerned. Instead they may be forced to either call on their old tried and tested experiences in the classroom to guide them, or/and they may read the policy and adopt and adapt what they recognise, which could lead to surface learning of the policy and consequently superficial change resulting in inadequate implementation. For new ideas to be effective, deep understanding is a prerequisite (Fullan, 1993). Conversely, I argue a superficial understanding may contribute to compromising the achievement of the policy goals. I therefore argue, based on the empirical evidence of the study and the theoretical framework that both teachers have a superficial understanding of the policy. This supports the first proposition that I make in this study, namely, *teachers' may not have a deep, sophisticated understanding of the purpose or meaning of the proposed change but rather a superficial understanding of what the change in assessment is about.* And I also argue that it is not the fault of the teachers that they have this superficial understanding of the policy, but the way it was introduced to them by the policy makers, an approach I call “the posting model” that represents a weak theory of change, where teachers were not provided with the opportunity to engage with the contents of the policy to develop the deep sophisticated understandings inherent in the policy.

The data also reveals, as indicated in the previous chapter, that each teacher also has somewhat different general understandings of the policy. This difference in understandings is dependent on each teacher's interpretation of the policy. Interpretations are not neutral processes, but shaped and influenced by personal and professional histories, experiences, values, purposes interests, knowledge, and motivation. This assertion is supported by Allington (2000), Darling-Hammond (1998), Elmore (1983), Looney (2001) and Mc Laughlin (1998). In other words, interpretation of policy is not devoid of politics, power, competing interests and

conflicting struggles (see Jansen, 2002:271). The personal, professional and contextual realities of each teacher are very different as I have indicated earlier. The interplay of these different personal, professional and contextual realities could account for the different understandings of the policy by each teacher. These realities may not necessarily help the teachers in their struggle to make sense of the policy. It is possible that the realities mentioned could act as obstacles to understanding the policy, for example, if the teachers experienced assessment as testing and examination only, and did not experience the new kinds of assessment they are expected to use. And so a paradox emerges. These very teachers are themselves the products of the very system they are now requested to change. A complex process with complex consequences as far as understanding is concerned. It is this complex difference of each teacher's understanding of the policy based on the interplay of their varied personal, professional and contextual realities that policymakers underestimate in the policy 'posting' process. The latter could also probably reflect that policy makers assume a homogenized understanding of the policy by all teachers in line with that of the policy makers. This again demonstrates the policy maker's weak theory of change.

Beliefs and capabilities

The data shows that each teacher evoked beliefs about the policy that were simultaneously positive and negative, or appealing and unsettling. The positive beliefs about the policy included both indicating the policy helped them to get to know their students better. But this positive belief about the policy was tempered with negative beliefs, for example Dinzi believed that the policy was not well planned while Hayley believed that the policy was a nightmare. In both cases the beliefs leaned more towards the negative. When teachers hold positive beliefs about the policy they probably would develop shared ownership and commitment towards the reform. Shared ownership and commitment, also affective components of change, are crucial for understanding and practicing something fundamentally new as the new assessment policy. The importance of beliefs in teacher learning and change is supported by Borg, (2001), Dunn (2003), Richards, et al. (undated) and Woods (1996). Policymakers and educational administrators seem to have given insufficient attention to this affective or emotional aspect of change. The importance of the emotional dimension of change or 'emotional intelligence' as it is often referred to, is rapidly

gaining currency in the educational change literature (see Fullan et al, 1999; Goleman 1995, 1998; Hargreaves, 1997, 1998, 2004). In this view educational change is seen as a moral and a deeply emotional one, and therefore positive beliefs about the policy by teachers would seem crucial for the deep understanding and effective implementation of the policy.

Related to the affective aspect of educational change is the cognitive aspect relating to knowledge and skills or capacity to bring about the change. In this study each teacher showed poor knowledge and skills relating to the policy, in other words their capacity to implement the policy is weak. Policymakers again underestimate the phenomenal leaps that teachers need to make in order to construct deep knowledge and skills or strong capacities to implement the new ideas embodied in the policy. The nature, content, and timing of training providing in the form of one-shot workshops described earlier is certainly inadequate for teachers to develop the new kind of capacity demanded by the policy. As I had indicated earlier, these workshop settings did not provide teachers with opportunities to overtly articulate their beliefs and capacities regarding the goals of the policy. The workshops did not provide teachers the opportunity to challenge and maybe change and develop their beliefs and capacities, and develop new ways of thinking about assessment. Skills, creative thinking and committed action really matter for the complex goals of policy (McLaughlin, 1998). This study revealed that the workshops were ‘telling sessions’ where teachers were treated as victims of change, expecting them to comply uncritically with the policy, and not as agents of change. Workshop facilitators and by implication policymakers may not have realized that “you cannot make people change (Fullan, 1993: 23, emphasis in original). You cannot tell and compel teachers to develop new capacities and beliefs. It is no denial that unless teachers’ beliefs and capacities are developed and changed in deep ways in line with the goals of the policy, impact may be limited. And the workshops prevented the teachers from developing the beliefs and capacities necessary to achieve the new and complex goals of the policy. This finding seems to support my second proposition, namely, *Teachers may not be able to reconcile their own assessment beliefs and capacities with the stated goals of the new assessment policy*. The reason for the teachers’ inability to reconcile their own assessment beliefs and capacities with the goals off the policy could possibly be due to the ineffective

nature of the training that they received, another example of the weak theory of change employed by policymakers to bring about change in teachers.

I experiment with the idea of intersecting teacher beliefs about the assessment policy with their capacity to change their assessment practice to examine the kind of change that emerges. I regard teachers' beliefs of the policy to be positive when they say positive things about the policy as indicated above, and negative when negative expressions are made about the policy as indicated above. Capacity could either be strong or weak as indicated above. I propose that when teachers' beliefs about the policy are positive and their capacity to implement the policy strong then deep change would result, and this deep change would possibly lead to deep, sophisticated understanding of the policy and its successful implementation, but if beliefs are negative and capacity weak then no real change would take place, meaning that understanding of the policy may be minimal and implementation unsuccessful. I illustrate the intersections of beliefs with capacities and the resulting changes below:

		Beliefs about policy	
		Positive	Negative
Capacity to implement policy	Weak	Mechanical change	No change
	Strong	Deep change	Superficial change

Dinzi did not use different methods of assessing such as assignments, projects, and portfolios as required by the policy; they were not evident in the observed lessons and follow up visits. This means that changes expected by the policy in this aspect did not take place. Both teachers did not use oral assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, interviewing and journals as required by the policy. Again this shows that no change took place towards achieving the goals of the policy. This observation that no change took place in the teachers' assessment practice in terms of the policy goals is not a reflection of each teacher's deficiency but rather of the weak theory of change adopted by policymakers, such as one-shot workshops that were inadequate and

ineffective, the way the policy is communicated to teachers, the ‘posting’ method, and others which I refer to later in the chapter. According to this model deep change will be the consequence of combining positive beliefs about the policy with strong capacity to implement the policy. And by implication, if teachers change deeply they may be able to successfully implement the policy.

Continuous assessment

Each teacher in the case study is at a different place as far as continuous assessment is concerned. As is evident in each of the cases, Hayley seemed to have moved towards using the continuous assessment model as required by the assessment policy while Dinzi seemed not to. However, in using the continuous assessment model, Hayley seemed to have reflected some of principles of the continuous assessment model but deflected others, as I had indicated in summarizing the modal patterns of the twenty observed lessons. I shall highlight the salient points to show the reflections and deflections. By reviewing the assessed activities she ensured that the results of assessment were fed back into and allowed for improvements to be made in the teaching and learning process; she did not merely use a series of traditional tests but various forms of assessment such as projects, assignments, and portfolios as required by the policy. However she struggled with assessing outcomes and values and attitudes in her assessment practice. This may be ascribed to several factors. One is the fact that she is so used to the traditional method of assessing that she may find it difficult to assess using the new continuous assessment model that focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, including the assessment of attitudes and values. Her historical experience and present experience as a senior Biology teacher seemed to add to her difficulty and struggles, because for most activities she had developed detailed marking memoranda indicating right and wrong answers, and she reported that she used marking memoranda to mark. Even with setting question papers she reported that she tested different cognitive levels, a process used for Biology testing. She also reported that she used the textbook to set questions rather than using the outcomes stipulated in the curriculum and assessment policy. Second, her school culture is characterized by the writing of tests every Wednesdays, the purpose of which is:

At the end of the day they are going to be expected to write a formal matric exam like what we've had all the years. So this is to prepare them for that. But I make it more OBE like by adding the rubrics. So basically what we're doing is we are really combining OBE with the old system to still give the child the best benefit so that they will be able to complete the matric final exam.

(B10)

I provide this lengthy quotation to show how strong the emphasis is on the examination and testing, which the continuous assessment model seems to be moving away from. Even with the half-year and final examination papers she reported: *it's exactly like the Biology final exam paper* (ibid). This experience as a senior Biology teacher and the school's testing culture could be contributing factors for Hayley struggling to use the continuous assessment model effectively. With reference to continuous assessment she said:

We work ourselves into a coma and mark ourselves into a coma. I do it because the school executive expects us to do it and we are following what the department wants from us.

(B3)

Although Hayley works very hard to prepare all her work, is well organized, is a dedicated teacher who cares for her students and is passionate about teaching, and is held in high regard by the principal, staff and students, I think when it comes to continuous assessment I would like to posit that her changes are mechanical, that is, she goes through the routines because it is expected of her but without committing to the deeper value orientations and belief systems that underpin the model. And this is not because she is deficient in any way. It could be ascribed to her superficial understanding of the policy, to the way the policy had been introduced discussed previously, the nature of the workshops also discussed previously, and I add two other factors that emerged from the study, namely a lack of a school-based support infrastructure and a lack of a monitoring or accountability mechanism.

In Dinzi's case I had only observed one test and one final examination being administered, with no evidence of continuous assessment as indicated in her case study report. The purpose of the final examination was for promotion purposes only as indicated by Dinzi. In her case I would posit that she made no real change in the

desired direction of the reform. And this is no fault of Dinzi, but to, as indicated for Hayley, the combined lack of a school-based support infrastructure and a lack of a monitoring or accountability mechanism. This again illustrates the weak theory of change employed by the policy makers. Policymakers seem to pay little attention to the unfamiliarity of this new type of continuous assessment compared to the past system where simple knowledge is much easier to assess. From years of precedence and practice, traditional pen and paper assessments generate reliable, valid and generalizable results that would understandably be more favoured by teachers. The new approaches to assessment, especially continuous assessment embodied in the policy do not easily fit traditional classes or traditional thinking. Continuous assessment is not only hard and complex for the teachers; it takes courage and involves risks. Teachers must be adventurous and willing to experiment and try things in a context that has not typically rewarded deep change. Teachers are expected to fight the stasis created by traditional tests and examination. Disturbing the status quo of tests and examinations could cause anxiety, fear and inadequacy in teachers. It is for this reason that a balanced combination of pressure in the form of monitoring or accountability and school based support is needed to guide and assist teachers make the shift from tests and examinations towards continuous assessment.

Although both teachers seem to be at different positions of change when it comes to continuous assessment the finding seems to support my third proposition, that is, *Teachers may find the traditional assessment practices (that is, examinations and testing) to hold greater efficacy in the classrooms than the alternatives required by a new assessment policy.*

I illustrate how support for change could interact with pressure for change by monitoring or accountability to produce deep change necessary to achieve the intentions of the assessment policy:

		Pressure for change	
		Weak	Strong
Support for change	Weak	No change	Mechanical change
	Strong	Superficial change	Deep change

I showed that Hayley displayed mechanical change because of the strong pressure from the education administrators and the school executive but a clear lack of support, while Dinzi did not change because both pressure for change and support for change were weak or lacking. According to this model, deep change may ensue by accompanying strong pressure for change with strong support for change. This means that if teachers change deeply they may be able to implement the policy successfully.

Policy conflicts and collisions

The data in both case studies showed very little if any use of outcomes in the observed practices of the teachers. Hayley used outcomes in two of the twenty observed lessons while Dinzi did not use outcomes in any of the seventeen observed lessons as discussed earlier. Since this is discontinuous with the outcomes-based policy, that emphasizes the use of outcomes to assess students, I would argue that the teachers made no change in this direction of the policy. The reason for this is not that they overtly rejected or resisted the idea of using outcomes, this rejection and resistance did not emerge in the study, but I would argue in addition to the other factors mentioned previously, for example, their surface understanding of the policy, the way the policy was introduced, the ineffective workshops, their lack of capacity and their negative beliefs about the policy, it may have been caused by the confusion and collisions caused by the policies and mixed messages by the education administrators. Both teachers are expected to simultaneously implement two different policies as I have discussed previously, the old policy known as NATED 550 for Grades 10, 11 and 12 and the new policy for Grades 7, 8 and 9. The new policy is responding partly

to the weaknesses inherent in the old policy. The old policy is not outcomes based and therefore may possibly conflict and collide with the requirements of the new policy. I argue that it may be possible for this conflict, collision and contradiction that contributed to the teachers not using outcomes in their assessment practice as required by the policy. Hayley illustrated this conflict:

[There] is lots of contradictions at the moment because they⁶ said for the portfolios the child⁷ must choose their best In matric we use all the things that they did the whole year.

(B3)

Policymakers may have under-rated the difficulties teachers would experience implementing two seemingly contradictory policies simultaneously. This could be a reflection of their weak theory of change. The difficulty experienced by teachers is exacerbated in a context of poor or no classroom based support and surface understanding of the new policy by the teachers. In experimenting with the idea of the relationship between policy conflicts and surface understandings of the policy, I develop different kinds of change as illustrated below:

		Understanding of change	
		Deep	Superficial
Policy	conflicts	Mechanical change	No change
	coherence	Deep change	Surface change

In the discussion above I showed that both teachers did not change in respect of using outcomes in their classroom practice, and the explanation for this probably is a combination of their surface understanding of the policy and the policy conflicts emanating from the simultaneous use of two policies. It can be seen that both deep understanding of the policy and policy coherence is required for deep change to take

⁶ Referring to the policymakers and educational administrators

⁷ Referring to Grade 9

place. This means that if teachers change deeply that may be able to successfully implement the policy.

Using the conceptual change framework on deep change I have shown that teachers may have to change deeply in order to realize the goals or intentions of the policy.

I shall examine the theory of education implicit in the policy before I relate it with the policymakers' theory of change or action.

Theory of education implicit in the official policy on assessment

This section is premised on my understanding that the new educational system, that is outcomes based, is a radical and deep departure from the past system of education that was mainly content driven. I follow Fullan (2003:53) in understanding a theory of education to encompass the pedagogical assumptions, the substance of content, pedagogy, moral purpose and best knowledge about the policy. It is with this lens that I examine the theory of education implicit in the new official policy on assessment.

The policy makes pedagogical assumptions with regard to the new curriculum and institutional contexts. By asserting that “this new assessment policy ... alongside the new national curriculum framework, provides the pedagogic basis for our new education and training system” (Department of Education, 1998: 7), the policy assumes that educators understand the new curriculum. This research study revealed that the two teachers' understanding of the new curriculum was limited. Second by asserting that the policy will “become a vital instrument for shaping educational practice in the thousands of sites of learning across the length and breadth of our country” the policy assumes uniform institutional or school contexts. In other words the different biographical, historical, political and contextual realities in different schools seem to be overlooked. And this study has shown that these biographical, historical, and contextual differences may have contributed to the different assessment practices of the two teachers. However in terms of content the policy seems very clear, first providing a rationale for the policy, the purpose of assessment, the what of assessment, the different types and tools of assessment, the principles of assessment, and recording and reporting procedures. The content seems to be aligned with what

Brown, et al (2003) call ‘transformative assessment’ and seem to embody the best knowledge and theory about assessment (see also Black, 1998; Gipps, 1994; Lambert and Lines, 2000; Mc Kellar, 2002; Spillane et al 2002). The pedagogy of the policy calls for the integration of curriculum, instruction (teaching and learning), assessment, and professional development of teachers thereby reflecting a deep change orientation to educational change (Fullan, 1999b). Its moral purpose may be reflected in its political and legislative legitimacy, its wide consultative process and in its ambition to improve the lives of all students without prejudice. Based on these observations I argue that the policy embodies a strong theory of education that represents a major and deep shift from the previous conceptions and processes of assessment. However policy is not contagious, in other words, the ideas of the policy would not diffuse on its own to teachers who are expected to implement the ideas in the policy. There needs to be a strategy to enable the policy ideas to be enacted by teachers in their classroom - that is, a theory of change (or action) is required.

Theory of change or action

If the assessment policy underpinned by a strong theory of education is to serve the engine of transformation and to change teachers deeply, its theory of change should be equally strong. This is the logic of the conceptual framework on deep change described above. The theory of change should make the theoretical premises of the policy less amorphous and more concrete, and should be designed to facilitate rather than restrict the implementation of the policy. This study has shown that the two teachers did not make deep changes, although Teacher Hayley made superficial changes and Teacher Dinzi no changes in aligning their assessment practices with the policy requirements. The hindrances to deep change and implementation success I will argue is due to the weak theories of action of the policy makers. Their weak theories of change emanating from the data include: avoiding or giving minimal attention to the deep analytical challenges associated with personal transformation of teachers, such as its inherent emotive nature, the emphasis on personal self awareness and the need to resolve past life issues, under-recognition of the professional characteristics of the teachers, under-valuing the beliefs and capacities of the teachers, paying insufficient attention to contextual realities of teachers, the ‘posting’ of policy to the teachers, insufficient recognition given to the conflicting and contradictory

demands made by two simultaneous policies on the work of the teachers, providing ineffective training to teachers, under-valuing the force that exit level examinations exert on teachers, no attention paid to classroom-based support, under recognition of the role of collaborative cultures or professional learning communities, insufficient attention given to monitoring or accountability, and the lack of attention given to the creation of an infrastructure for reform in each school. The theory of change seemed to underestimate the complexities and subtleties of teacher change at the level of the classroom. It is this weak theory of change, I argue, that could account for the superficial understandings of the policy by the teachers, the different beliefs about the policy, and the continuities and discontinuity between the new assessment policy and the assessment practices of the teachers.

This study tested the three propositions and found the following:

Proposition one:

The two case study teachers did not have a deep, sophisticated understanding of a new assessment policy even if there is evidence of strong rhetorical commitment to this policy.

Proposition 2:

The two case study teachers were not able to reconcile their own assessment beliefs and capacities with the stated goals of a new assessment policy.

Proposition 3:

The two case study teachers found that traditional assessment practices (that is, examinations and testing) held greater efficacy in the classrooms than the alternatives required by a new assessment policy.

I wish to restate that the two case study teachers were unable to make deep changes as required by the radical, and ambitious official policy on assessment because the theory of change adopted by policymakers were weak, and not because the teachers are deficient in any way and need to be 'fixed'. While I argue for a strong theory of change, I wish to underscore the importance of a strong theory of change that is realistic, resourced and resilient or flexible. The theory of change should also recognise the non-linearity, complexity, dynamism and unpredictability of the educational change process.

This brings me to the next section, namely the implications arising out of this study.

Implications of this study

The study has identified and explained various factors that shaped teachers' assessment practices in their classrooms. The point made was that the teachers did not change deeply in line with the changes reflected in the new assessment policy. The study argued that for teachers to change deeply, reformed policies need to be informed by strong theories of education and accompanied by equally strong theories of change. This argument points to the implications of the study for:

- Teacher learning;
- Professional development of teachers; and
- Future research.

Implications for teacher learning

The study has shown that when policy and related documents had been posted or merely given to teachers with limited or no discussions, learning occurred mostly at a superficial level. It therefore raises important issues about the nature of introducing teachers to new policies and about the resulting nature of learning. This implies that for deep teacher learning to take place, appropriate conditions should be provided for discussions, debates, and clarifications of ideas contained in the policy. This opportunity should be provided close to where teachers do their work; in other words, learning closer to teachers' context. Equally important is for teacher learning to occur closer to teachers' cognition in terms of how they understand their work. This contextually-based teacher learning could possibly assist teachers in addressing the multiple realities they face such as conflicting demands made by educational authorities as well as by different policies. Paying deliberate attention to teachers' contexts and teachers' cognition in the policy learning process seems critical for teacher learning that is deep rather than superficial.

Implications for professional development of teachers

This dissertation has fore-grounded the personal and professional characteristics of teachers, the understandings and beliefs of teachers towards the new policy, as well as the context in which teachers work. It is recognition of this wealth of biographical experiences and school contexts that matter in bringing about deep change in teachers for the successful implementation of reformed policy goals. When providing professional development opportunities for teachers, policy makers should be sensitive to, and take cognisance of these factors in the policy change process. A range of opportunities need to be provided for the articulation of teachers' understandings, beliefs and assumptions about new policies. The professional development programme should include a system for school-based support and a mechanism for monitoring policy implementation. The professional development programme is one forum to present a powerful theory of change that demonstrates how the personal and professional characteristics of teachers, their understandings and beliefs of reformed policies, and the school context intersect to enable and empower to teachers to change deeply in order to realise the transformational goals of new policies.

Implications for further research

In this section I highlight a number of questions invoked by this study that could serve as a springboard for further research. The questions are:

- Will a strong theory of change coupled with a strong theory of education result in deep change? In other words, if all the conditions indicated in the study were present, would this result in deep change among teachers?
- How can deep change be effected in teachers firstly in a rapidly transforming country like South Africa, and secondly in a developing country like South Africa with limited human and fiscal capacity?
- “What would a strong theory of change look like in a rural school, in a township school, in an urban school, and in a private school?” This question arises from my recognition that there cannot be a one-size-fit- all theory of change. This is supported by Fullan (2003) who asserts that the change theory

should be modified and contextualised. This question is especially relevant in South Africa where the geopolitical, social and economic unevenness or gaps are still part of life.

- Is the theory of education implicit in the policy too ambitious for the South African context where most teachers have been educated in the old system?
- How can deep understanding of a policy be developed especially in a context where the language capital of teachers differs from that in which the policy is written?
- Why did policymakers employ a seemingly weak theory of change?

In this study I present the argument that if the intentions of policies are to be realized at the level of teachers' classroom practice, teachers need to change deeply. In other words, if teachers do not change deeply the achievement of policy objectives may be compromised. Deep change in teachers may possibly be achieved when policymakers have developed policies that are underpinned by a strong theory of education and driven by an equally strong theory of change or action. Compromising on either the theory of education or on the theory of change would prevent deep change in teachers, which in turn would hinder the successful implementation of the policy.

I have provided a broader theoretical lens into understanding the relationship between policy and practice. While the findings from the study provide a policy picture that is less than ideal, I would cautiously follow the injunction made by Bengu⁸ (1998:7):

[The] transformation of established assessment practice involves a lengthy process of learning and professional development.

This process of learning and professional development hopefully would embrace a strong theory of change for policy implementation to be successful. Over the next decade, policy makers and policy researchers may want to consider how investments in strong theories of change accompanied by strong theories of education could assist in achieving reformed educational goals successfully. This is especially important now when teachers and schools are being asked to change in unprecedented ways and at unprecedented speed, in other words, to change deeply. It is time for education policy reform to go not only wider, but also deeper.

⁸ First democratically elected Minister of Education in South Africa from 1994 to 1999.