UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT IN A CHANGING EDUCATIONAL SETTING

by

Tendani Emmanuel Sivhabu

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

in the Department of Comparative Education and Education Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria, South Africa

Supervisor : Prof. S.J. Berkhout

October 2002

© University of Pretoria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to say "Thank you" to my supervisor, Professor Sarie J. Berkhout who painstakingly guided me through this research. I must say that this has been the most difficult work I have had to do in my life. There were times when I felt so down, looking at the masses of information I had and not knowing where to start in order to make sense of the information. Prof. S.J. Berkhout was always there urging me on, and even taking me through her own experiences as she does her own research. This gave me a lot of courage and from this I managed to go on and produce this report. To her I say "May you live long so that you can be a pillar of support for many others after me."

I also received assistance from many other people who are too numerous to mention by name. I would like to thank all those teachers who agreed to recount their experiences and to share their thoughts with me. I also thank my colleagues at work and all those other people who influenced my thinking and also critiqued my work. I dedicate this work to my family. To my children and my wife and to my parents for always being supportive to me. Above all, I would like to thank God for never abandoning me even during the times when I felt I could abandon this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Background to the problem	1-12
1.2. Research question	1
1.3. Aims of the study	7
1.4. Scope of the study	8
1.5. Methodology / procedure	9
1.5.1. Literature study	9
1.5.2. Empirical research	9
1.5.2.1. Why qualitative research	9
1.5.2.2. Population and sample	10
1.5.2.3. Data collection	10
1.5.2.4. Data analysis	10
1.5.2.5. Significance of the research	11
1.6. Area delimitation	11
1.7. Structure of the research	12
CHAPTER TWO: THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE FOR TEACHERS	**13-66**
2.1. Introduction	13
2.2. The importance of teachers in the change process	13
2.2.1. The meaning of educational change	13
2.2.2. The purpose of educational change	14
2.2.3. Teachers and educational change	16
2.2.4. Educational policy change and the impact on teachers	19
2.2.4.1. What is educational policy?	19
2.2.4.2. The role of teachers in policy	22
2.3. Educational transformation in South Africa since 1994	27
2.3.1. Pressures for educational change	27
2.3.2. The introduction of outcomes based education in South Africa	30

2.3.3. Implications of curriculum 2005 for teachers 31
2.4. Professional support for teachers 34
2.4.1. The meaning of professional support for teacher 34
2.4.2. The demands and challenges of change on teachers 35
2.4.3. The challenges that teachers in South Africa face 41
2.4.4. The need for support 44
2.4.5. The goals of teacher support 45
2.5. Some issues relating to professional support from abroad 50
2.5.1. Introduction : a view from the United States of America 50
2.5.2. Papua New Guinea 53
2.5.2.1. Introduction 53
2.5.2.2. Background to the Papua New Guinea Community Teacher's College Lecturers' Professional Development (CTC Project) 54
2.5.2.3. Project goal 55
2.5.2.4. Professional growth 56
2.5.2.5. Personal development 57
2.5.2.6. Implementation for sustainability 58
2.5.2.7. Key issues raised by the CTC Project 59
2.5.3. India 60
2.5.3.1. Introduction 60
2.5.3.2. The implementation of Operation Blackboard 61
2.5.3.3. The adoption and rejection of teaching learning aids (TLA's) 63
2.5.3.4. The wider implications of Operation Blackboards for policy implementation 64
2.6. Summary and further programme 66

CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY : A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN 67-107

3.1. Introduction 67
3.2. Design of the study 68

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

3.2.1. Introduction 68
3.2.2. Qualitative research contrasted with quantitative research 68
3.2.3. Other characteristics of qualitative research 70
3.3. Theoretical underpinnings: justification (rationale) for the research methodology chosen 75
3.4. Sample selection 81
3.5. Data collection 84
3.6. Data analysis 90
3.7. Pilot study 97
3.8. Establishing trustworthiness 99
3.8.1. Validity 99
3.8.1.1. Internal validity or credibility 99
3.8.1.2. External validity or transferability 101
3.8.2. . Reliability or dependabily 102
3.8.2. Objectivity or confirmability 103
3.9. Researcher bias and assumptions 103
3.10. Study limitations 106
3.11. Summary and further programme 107

CHAPTER FOUR : PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA **108-175**

4.1. Introduction 108
4.2. Teacher understandings and experiences of educational change 109
4.2.1. Politics and educational policy change 109
4.2.2. Informing teachers about educational policy change 113
4.2.3. Attitude to change 122
4.2.4. The implementation of curriculum change 130
4.3. Teacher understandings and experiences of professional support 134
4.3.1. Workshops for teachers 134
4.3.2. In-school support 141

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

4.3.3. Teacher collaboration 153
4.3.4. Support from parents 160
4.3.5. Other issues of concern to teachers 164
4.3.5.1. Teaching learning material 164
4.3.5.2. Commitment and accountability 167
4.4. Summary and further programme 174

CHAPTER FIVE : SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY 176

5.1. Introduction 176
5.2. The significance of this study for South African education 176
5.3. The implications of this study for South African education 183
5.4. Final comments 189

BIBLIOGRAPHY 194

ADDENDUM A : Interview letter of consent 206

ADDENDUM B: Interviewee details 207

ABSTRACT

The introduction of outcomes based education, what in South Africa is called Curriculum 2005, in 1998 ushered in a new era in South African education. Curriculum 2005 will take some years to filter through the whole schooling system, yet a revision has already had to be instituted and a New Curriculum Statement is envisaged to be introduced to schools starting in 2004.

This study has examined the experiences of teachers with regard to the purpose, scope and practices of professional support within the changing educational setting of South Africa. In doing so the study also examined the actual experiences of teachers with regard to educational change and professional support, particularly in relation to outcomes based education. The study also indicated the measures that can be taken in order to improve the provision of professional support for teachers.

The study used a qualitative method of research. It used a non-positivist interpretative / constructivist approach. To obtain information, the study used open ended interviews with five teachers from Thohoyandou District, Limpopo Province. The teachers, three males and two females, all teach grade 7 classes. Purposeful sampling was used to select those teachers who I regarded as having the necessary and relevant knowledge, understandings, and experiences for this research and were willing to share their experiences. The data analysis used here is based on the ideas of grounded theory, which argues for detailed grounding of theory in the systematic and intensive analysis of empirical data in a microscopic detailed fashion.

The report discusses issues such as politics and educational change, the context of change, teacher collaboration, commitment and

accountability. Other issues discussed included advocacy for the changes, the timing of workshops for outcomes based education and training for teachers, in school support by principals and heads of department and site visits by curriculum advisors to provide support for teachers as they grapple with the changes. The research indicates that teachers within the same context can have different conceptions or multiple mental constructions about educational change and professional support which may contradict each other, or be in conflict with each other. This research therefore calls for a more personal interactive mode of professional support provision, involving a juxtaposition of conflicting and contradicting ideas, in which efforts are made to obtain the multiple perspectives that teachers have. This will lead to a reconsideration of ideas, methods and positions as the provision of professional support progresses, thus allowing for complementarities to be discovered.

Keywords

1. Professional support
2. Education policy change
3. Teacher understandings of education policy change
4. Teacher experiences of education policy change
5. Qualitative research
6. Open- ended interviews.
7. Trustworthiness in qualitative research.
8. Politics in educational policy change.
9. Teacher collaboration
10. Context of educational change