Educational Change in South Africa
Reflections on Local Realities, Practices, and Reforms

Everard Weber (Ed.)
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

The literature on Educational Change has been dominated by research published in the established, liberal democracies. This volume examines Educational Change in South Africa, a country undergoing rapid social and political change, and situated geographically, historically and culturally in the South. What are the meanings and processes of change? How do we explain the contours and contexts of change? What has changed? What has remained the same?

The book is divided into seven sections: Introduction and Overview, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Teacher Education, Schools, Higher Education, Systemic Change and a Conclusion. Several chapters argue that there is a strong relationship between national and international developments, and educational change. Samoff asks, “Whither Education in South Africa” in the context of history: Bantu Education, People’s Education, and Outcomes-based Education. Other writers analyse the relative autonomy of educational change from the wider social world. De Kock and Slabbert explore the personal growth and professional development of student teachers through teacher education programmes. Soudien and Gilmour conclude by stating the greatest systemic challenge is the poor quality of learning among black students. They say the state produces and reproduces inequities because, inter alia, it has not adequately addressed the apartheid legacy.

South African scholars and students, researchers and change-agents in civil society, and policymakers will find this collection useful. Academics and practitioners in International Education will also profit from this book.
Educational Change in South Africa: Reflections on Local Realities, Practices, and Reforms
Educational Change in South Africa: Reflections on Local Realities, Practices, and Reforms

Everard Weber
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td></td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xvii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Section A Introduction and Overview

### Chapter 1
The Scholarship of Educational Change:
*Concepts, Contours, and Contexts*

*Everard Weber*

### Chapter 2
*Why do teachers do what they do?*
*Teacher decision-making in the context of curriculum change in South Africa*

*Newton Stoffels*

### Chapter 3
*Assessing curriculum change in underdeveloped contexts:*
*A case study of science curriculum reform in South Africa*

*Annemarie Hattingh*

### Chapter 4
*Between stagnation and unrealistic innovation in the science education curriculum:*
*Exploring the concept of change within a zone of feasible innovation*

*John Rogan*

### Chapter 5
*Fundamental change in mathematics education:*
*An analysis of teachers’ classroom practices and conceptions of their discipline*

*Hayley Barnes*
TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Section C  Teacher Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Personal growth and professional development of student teachers through teacher education programmes</td>
<td>Thea De Kock and Johannes Slabbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Changing student-teachers’ beliefs and attitudes towards difference in South African classrooms</td>
<td>Saloshna Vandeyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Improving teacher education: An analysis of the relations of power in mentorship, collaboration and reflection during a teaching practice programme</td>
<td>Carol van der Westhuizen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section D  Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Diversity and School Reform: A critique of the scholarship on School Effectiveness and School Improvement</td>
<td>Patti Silbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Seeking security: Jewish education in post-apartheid South Africa</td>
<td>Chaya Herman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Changing Teachers’ Work at Tshwane High School: History, Management, Accountability, and Politics</td>
<td>Everard Weber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section E  Higher Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Community engagement at higher education institutions in South Africa: From a philanthropic approach to a scholarship of engagement</td>
<td>Gerda Bender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>From antiquity to infancy: Changing institutional cultures at higher education institutions</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>In search of discursive spaces in higher education</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Section F Systemic Change</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Organisational change: From adjusting the clock to morphogenesis</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Democratic intent and democratic practice: Tensions in South African school governance</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The impact of finance equity reforms in post-apartheid schooling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section G Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Educational Change and the Quality Challenge in South African Schooling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soweto students reject Bantu Education. Schools become staging grounds for the struggle against apartheid. Activists, researchers, and communities collaborate to develop new education policies. Curriculum reforms are grounded in neighbourhood discussions. Teacher militants organize, protest, and challenge. A segregated marginal institution proclaims itself the university of the Left. Over several decades education in South Africa was at the centre of the struggle to end apartheid and transform society.

Jump to the present. On the usual measures, much of the education system does not do well. Schools struggle to maintain quality. With equipment and fittings lost to thieves and drug dealers at their gates, students and teachers become dispirited and alienated. Many show up sporadically or arrive but do little work. Assured they are being empowered, teachers see innovations as imposed and unmanageable and regard national and provincial education departments with suspicion, distrust, or worse. Privilege, often still based on race and increasingly on class, assert itself at every turn. University students mock integration and enthusiastically support reactionary parties. The gains – they exist, and they are significant – are regularly swamped by education’s debilitating disabilities. The struggles are more about survival than social transformation.

Whither education in South Africa?

More than a decade since the majority rule election of 1994 finds South Africa taking stock on many fronts, including education. In part, that reflects healthy debates about public policy in a democratic society. In part, that reflects the challenges and tensions of leadership transition. In part, that reflects the tremors generated by the combination of an expanding middle class and increasing inequality. Schools both reflect and contribute to those social currents.

For education, that reassessment has a strong foundation. The analysts have been engaged, systematic, critical, and incisive. The exchanges have been pointed and sustained. The writing is rich, insightful, and instructive. A careful review, alas, is beyond the reach of this brief essay.

Still, it is clear that education has not been the dynamo at the centre of social transformation. Regularly, schools have been the quicksand to avoid or the bog to be traversed, not the path to a new future and not the engine of change. Why?
Answering big questions – developing explanations – is an organic and collaborative process. Education in South Africa is a sharply contested arena, with complex overlapping issues, sharply contending agendas, and divergent, sometimes complementary but often incompatible, perspectives. It is fruitful here, therefore, to explore briefly several threads to be woven into a fuller understanding of education in contemporary South Africa. To be explained are not only troubling examination results and dysfunctional schools but also education’s role in maintaining and transforming society.

Sharpening the analysis requires focusing on what has not gone well. That is not to ignore the successes nor to devalue the efforts of committed and dedicated educators. The gains are to be celebrated. Many more students are in school. The elite schools and universities are no longer forbidden territory to Africans. Curriculum reform is an on-going national project. Resources have been redistributed, with additional funds available to less affluent communities. And more. As Cabral reminded us, however, “Tell no lies. Claim no easy victories.” Productive stock-taking requires frank discussion and demanding questions.

REFORM, NOT TRANSFORMATION

One explanatory thread begins in the analyses and conceptions of the early 1990s. Education plans and projections emphasized transformation. That transformation was difficult but within reach. The assumption that power prevails was persuasive. Yet, electing a new leadership was essential, but far from sufficient. The articulation of what was to be done was not accompanied by a parallel analysis of how that could be accomplished in majority-ruled South Africa. How, for example, was the broad popular support for the African National Congress to be organized into a solid foundation for radical education change? African parents demanded more schools and more access, not different schools. Who, then, was to explain to them that the structure of schooling, not simply its racial exclusiveness, was fundamentally conservative and that entering schools that had changed little would not end their children’s disadvantage? Accordingly, post-1994 education practice focused heavily on desegregation and expanding access. With few exceptions, schools remained hierarchical, authoritarian, and teacher-centred. The goal was improved results in, say, mathematics or history. Critical reasoning, self-reliant learning, cooperative approaches, community responsiveness, environmental awareness, self-confident assumption of responsibility, political consciousness, engaged citizenship, and more were marginalized. Notwithstanding regularly reiterated high aspirations and grand objectives, a narrow conception has produced narrow results.

MANAGING, NOT LEADING

The energetic education activism of the 1970s-1990s nurtured intense debates about policy and practice, militant organizations that mobilized students, teachers, and higher education staff, and leaders whose ideas, public roles, and legitimacy
were forged in the struggle. The senior post-1994 education leadership, however, came from a different direction. Their selection was conditioned by the politics of interests, constituency balancing, and public respectability that characterize the formation of new governments. In itself, that is not undesirable. Politics is an essential mechanism for assuring democratic representation and participation. For the momentum of education transformation, however, those selections were a damper, favouring management and incremental change over leadership and bold initiatives.

Also slowing change was the implementation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Among the compromises that led to the negotiated transition to majority rule was the inclusion in government of the former rulers, the National Party, and those responsible for apartheid-supported vicious anti-ANC attacks, Inkatha. Respect and reconciliation were the order of the day. Even though the ANC had won nearly two-thirds of the national vote (and perhaps more), its education programme was regularly exposed to veto by its GNU partners. Very concerned to secure the support of those who opposed change, the new education officials moved cautiously. Largely, they assigned priority to legal and administrative frameworks, in contrast to Namibia, with a similar negotiated transition to majority rule, where systemic change strategies were at the top of the agenda.

Notions of reconciliation and unity facilitated the negotiated transition. They also inclined the new leadership toward management and administration and slowed and redirected the transformation envisioned by the education democratic movement.

TEACHERS AS TECHNICIANS

The evolution of teachers’ roles provides a third explanatory thread. As schools became principal terrains for struggle, teachers faced difficult choices. Some joined the activists, at high personal risk. Some took advantage of the intermittent disruptions and school closures to do little work. Others sought to labour on, trying to maintain their mission and protect their jobs by avoiding politics.

Majority rule inherited an education morass of a deeply embedded racialized philosophy, multiple authorities and institutional arrangements, and transition rules that required that no staff be terminated. Staffing, curriculum, and teacher education issues compounded the problems. Since class size was both an indicator and cause of education inequality, there was immediate pressure to increase class size, that is, reduce the number of teachers in schools in more affluent communities. As well although teachers were expected to play central roles, the introduction of outcomes-based education brought complex curriculum reform with inadequate preparation and support for already insecure teachers. With inconsistent messages about the direction and pace of political change, uncertainty about the consequences of curriculum reform and the provincialization of education for job tenure, and its parent confederation a partner in governing the country, the militant teachers union was pressed to focus on the practical issues of wages, hours, and working conditions, and especially on protecting teachers who
faced retrenchment or termination. That, of course, is an appropriate union role. But as it concentrated on workers, it reduced its role in shaping and changing education and weakened teacher accountability. At the same time, mergers and consolidation in higher education closed most of the teachers colleges and attached others to universities, with resulting confusion about the orientation and content of teacher education and its ties to the schools.

Where transformation is the objective, teachers cannot be bystanders. Even where the reform objectives are more limited, they are unlikely to be achieved against active teacher resistance. Namibia again provides a useful comparison. Expecting the teachers to be the bearers of education reform, leaders assigned highest priority to the transformation of teacher education. Teachers are to be the change activists. Although there is an increasingly extensive evaluative literature, it is too soon to draw firm conclusions. Whatever the outcomes, the conception was clear. In contrast, South African teachers are regularly seen as the technicians of education, expected to implement education reforms in a setting of contradictory incentives and rewards. Accountable to provincial education departments for reforms most do not understand well and many do not support, they are also accountable to parents and communities for results on examinations that they do not develop and that thus far do not reflect the intended curriculum changes. Some teachers have seized the ambiguities as an opportunity to innovate. Many, however, have become alienated and dispirited, unenthusiastically presenting a minimal curriculum and teaching to national examinations, with little effective accountability. Few are excited and activist champions of change.

DESEGREGATION, NOT INTEGRATION

Segregated education was critical to apartheid’s master plan. Schools were to equip a few Africans with the skills deemed necessary, but most important, were expected to limit aspirations. Apartheid society had a place for Africans, and schools were to keep them there. Desegregation was a premise and promise of the anti-apartheid struggle. Discriminatory laws and rules were quickly eliminated. Also attacked energetically were the racialized history in school texts and explicit and implicit biases in other instructional materials. But what was to follow?

How were exclusively white schools to become institutions that welcomed mass education and black students? Who was to help teachers learn that what they regarded as human nature was neither inherent nor immutable? How could schools be desegregated amidst persisting residential segregation? What forms would transformation take as those who resisted desegregation used commitments to local control, to home language education, and to reconciliation to protect their privilege?

The former Model C schools provide a useful example. Community control was an initiative of the late apartheid era intended to enable white parents to preserve their schools, including facilities and equipment. The post-1994 Model C schools debate focused on two alternatives: terminate their special status in order to redistribute resources and reduce inequality or tolerate them in order to promote
reconciliation and preserve their quality. Hotly disputed, those alternatives missed the larger point. The major challenge was not to eliminate or tolerate but how to transform the schools. With few exceptions, there has been little progress down that path. A few former Model C schools remain enclaves of privilege, now with more Africans among their students. Many have decayed, either closed or enrolling African students but not offering an effective education programme.

Education transformation in South Africa requires integration of two sorts. First, desegregation is necessary but not sufficient to enable schools to become productive and nurturing learning environments for all South Africans. As well, inadequate instructional materials, insecure campuses, teacher and student absenteeism, anger, and alienation are all corrosive of learning. While some of the problems that plague schools have their roots in the larger community, transformation requires that schools take the lead and not simply await solutions.

Second, education for all in South Africa requires integrating the different sorts of schools – poorly and well equipped, high and low scoring, rural and urban, perhaps even private and public – into a single education system with a common mission and a shared basic ethos. While that will surely take time, it is far from clear that current policies and programmes are making progress toward that objective.

One challenge here is the locus of authority. Developing an appropriate and politically sustainable balance between central direction and local autonomy is an on-going process. But systemic integration is undermined when decentralized responsibility serves as a strategy for preserving privilege and withdrawing from the education system rather than contributing to it. Similarly problematic is the use of centralized authority to undermine and constrain local innovation and community activism.

Currently, mini school systems that serve different purposes and different communities, all clamoring for resources, are formally linked but in practice pull in disparate directions. More generally, slow progress on the second, systemic integration retards efforts to achieve racial desegregation.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION MUDDLE

Higher education frames a fifth major explanatory thread. At the transition to majority rule there was broad agreement that reorganizing higher education required priority attention. At the same time, there was and continues to be a strong sense that what are regarded as the strengths of the elite institutions must not be jeopardized. Regularly, that has led to continuity at what is commonly perceived to be higher education’s high status core and change at its lower status periphery, which has left most of higher education marginal to education transformation nationally. Leading white institutions have largely been sheltered from institutional rearrangements, while black institutions have been reorganized and merged. Intended to support quality, the higher education national funding strategy significantly entrenches the existing differentiation.
The elimination of two major higher education sub-systems, the colleges and the technikons, has not yet produced a well-integrated higher education system. Nor has the merger process effectively addressed the roles played by the institutions that have been eliminated and absorbed. In addition to preparing teachers, for example, education colleges provided opportunities for many students to continue their education beyond secondary school, and some were responsive to their local communities in ways that universities have not been and generally do not seek to be. Indeed, the reorganization has reduced the developmental mission and local and national accountability of higher education institutions. The national qualifications and accreditations system is likely to be more consequential for what are regarded as the second tier institutions and to influence relatively little the orientation and conduct of the elite universities.

Here too, definitive assessments are premature. Often, universities are resilient in their resistance to change and imaginative and resourceful in deflecting pressures to reform. It is timely, however, indeed essential, to assess the change process. The interim results are not promising. To date, higher education reform has not been transformative. Nor has that process developed a solid foundation for transformation.

With a few exceptions, higher education authorities have generally managed rather than led. Apparently intended to assure broad representation and legitimacy, the university council system has been generally conservative in its selection of senior officials and reluctant to initiate, or insist on, or support fundamental change. In recent years, neither the academic staff nor students have demanded that higher education content and process be assessed critically or proposed new directions. The dispersed authority for creating and organizing knowledge that is a strength of higher education can readily absorb, diffuse, and deflect the critiques that do arise.

Prominent here is the mystique of standards. Broad agreement that change is important is overwhelmed by the deep fear that change will compromise what are deemed the high standards of the elite institutions. One consequence is that the standards themselves receive little critical scrutiny. Even less well examined are the ways in which the standards impede innovation, reduce accountability, and entrench privilege.

EDUCATION FOR ELITES

The transition to majority rule required South Africa’s education system to address two major transformations. One was to transform a system organized by race into a system in which race was no longer a consequential criterion for selection, promotion, and academic success. The other was to transform a system designed to educate a small elite into a system that could provide quality education to all South Africans. The two transformations are intertwined. Both remain incomplete. Both are at risk.

The legacy was disabling. Apartheid education created neither the institutional framework nor the cadre of skilled and experienced personnel ready to address
those transformations. Equally problematic, apartheid education did not encourage and regularly sought to block critical reflection on alternative approaches to curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher education.

The democratic movement’s intense efforts to explore alternatives and develop new strategies were involving, exciting, and promising, but in practice have had far less impact on post-1994 education policy than was anticipated. For the most part, for example, People’s Education was a strategy for popular mobilization but has not become public education policy.

Desegregating education has moved rapidly. But deracializing education remains an unachieved objective. Visible indicators, though superficial, are instructive. It remains difficult to imagine a national list of primary or secondary school prize winners whose composition reflects the demographic characteristics of the country. So too the lists of students admitted to elite universities, or teacher educators, or university professors. Of course, rendering race unimportant in a system built on racial differentiation will be both painful and time-consuming. But progress is not automatic. Nor are achievements guaranteed. Pursuing desegregation rather than deracialization will slow the transformation still more.

South Africa regularly reports to the global education community that it has achieved basic education for all. Universal secondary education is on the horizon. Those pronouncements are premature. It is simply not the case that all young South Africans have equal access to quality education. The obstacles are both conceptual and practical.

The immediate post-1994 pressure was to expand access. On that, there has been great progress that must not be minimized. But opening the gates wider to welcome more students into a system whose structure remains fundamentally elitist does not and cannot convert it into a mass education system. That transformation requires philosophical and programmatic changes that have only begun to be explored.

For example, it is common to talk of the education pyramid. But if basic education is to be education for all, then its shape should be a rectangle, not a pyramid. All who begin the first year are expected to reach its final year. There should be as many students at basic education’s top level as at its bottom. Retaining the pyramid image reflects the persisting deep assumption that schooling is about sifting and sorting and that there should be fewer students at the top than at the bottom. A mass education system, however, where many students start but many fewer reach the top is seriously flawed. Of course circumstances and events outside schools, from home environment to neighbourhood gangs to high unemployment influence education outcomes. But an effective mass education system must address its environment, not seek to be sheltered from it.

Consider what schools do. If all learners are expected to complete basic education, then there is little need for differentiation and selection during that period. Ample evidence indicates that grouping and tracking do not help the most successful students and retard further those labeled the least competent. Tests and examinations serve better to assess the health of curriculum, programmes, teaching, and schools than to measure individual progress. Similarly, explanations for failure must focus as much or more on systemic deficiencies as on individuals’
intelligence, or attentiveness, or hard work. Where the primary focus is on learning rather than teaching, schools become less hierarchical and more participatory. Where effective accountability is institutionalized, communities are engaged in and protect their schools.

The general point here is that even as it has expanded access, education in South Africa has maintained and perhaps reinforced its elitist character.

The overarching concern has been to protect quality. But the usual notion of quality is itself an obstacle to education for all. Consider a secondary school with consistently high examination (matric) results and equally consistent high female attrition. Since matric scores are the most common measure of quality, that school would be considered excellent. If the goal is educating a small elite, that school is indeed good. But if the goal is universal education, that school is very poor, since it has proved itself unable to educate effectively half the population. Put sharply, the efforts to preserve elite schools reinforce an understanding of education that subtly but powerfully undermines the development of quality mass education. Lionizing the elite universities without obliging them to play a leading role in education transformation compounds the obstacles, both by reinforcing the narrow notion of quality and success and by justifying the differentiated education to which South Africans have access.

Quality and equity are not alternatives. In an effective education system, each requires the other. Transformation requires that each energize the other.

Threads to weave an explanation. These issue clusters could of course be organized differently. Space permitting, they could be expanded substantially. Accountability is another important thread, as are a surprisingly apolitical approach to public policy making and the internalization of external influence. My concern here has been to challenge the mystique of education in South Africa, outlining a framework for exploring both its progress and problems to date and its directions in the future. In that, I have drawn heavily on the substantial scholarship on education and on the insights of its analysts. And in that, I join with the colleagues whose contributions follow.

Joel Samoff
Consulting Professor
Center for African Studies
Stanford University
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank several colleagues, individuals and institutions for their assistance in this project. Dave Gilmour, Crain Soudien and Jonathan Jansen worked with me on the first round of the review. Peter de Liefde at Sense organised the second round, an independent and blind peer-review of all the chapters. Joel Samoff agreed to study the text and, with flair, write the Foreword. Chapter 4 by John Rogan is a revised version of an article that first appeared in the journal, Science Education (2007), vol. 91, no. 3, pp. 439–460. I am grateful to Wiley & Sons, Inc. for permission to publish it in this book. I am also grateful to Irma Eloff at the University of Pretoria, and Shireen Motala at the Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, for finding financial support at their respective institutions to produce the book. Special thanks to Ingrid Willenberg at the University of the Western Cape, Nicolas Dieltiens and Roger Deacon for helping to prepare the manuscript for publication. The writers of the different chapters worked hard over several years and put up with my many requests with patience and grace. I dedicate my share of the work to their efforts.

E.W.
September 2008.
1. THE SCHOLARSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:

Concepts, Contours, and Contexts

PURPOSE

Instead of the celebratory, commonsense understandings about change in the “new” South Africa, academics and researchers were invited to ask deeper, more probing questions about educational reform in the country. Our aim in this book is fourfold. First, we wish to focus on change through the lenses of the details of specific reforms or innovations, and a variety of analyses and research methodologies. Second, we wish study the meanings and processes of change in South Africa, a developing country undergoing rapid educational and social transformation. How do we explain the contradictory contours and contexts of change? What has changed and what has remained the same? Third, we wish to examine change from the perspective of a country situated geographically, historically, and culturally in the South. Fourth, we think that when all is said and done our work speaks more broadly to the nature of post-apartheid society and its place in an increasingly integrated world.

Over the last several decades Educational Change has established itself as a distinct field of scholarship, partly no doubt in response to the wave of reforms initiated by many governments during the 1980s. One thinks here of the landmark publication, *International Handbook of Educational Change* by Kluver (Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan & Hopkins, 1998) with new editions under the Springer name (Fullan, 2005; Lieberman, 2005; Hargreaves, 2005; Hopkins, 2005), and the relatively new *Journal of Educational Change*. Arguably, the main difficulty with this genre of research is that it has concentrated on change in the established, liberal democracies while too often ignoring change in countries in which there have been dramatic shifts in the social order. It has also neglected to study change in conditions of, in the well-known words of Andre Frank, “the development of underdevelopment.” South Africa occupies the unenviable position where the divide between rich and poor, which is also a racial gap between white and black, is amongst the biggest in the world. Scholars and practitioners in education in other countries will recognise many of the developments discussed in this book, such as the introduction of new curricula based on constructivist approaches, the problems of decentralized governance, and the growing influence of marketisation in education, as familiar with reforms implemented in their own
countries. Educational change in South Africa, as elsewhere, is both global and local.

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN SCHOLARSHIP

The contradictions of globalisation have implications for research. Our aims in this project highlight a problem I have discussed elsewhere (Weber, 2007) that relates to the articulation, as opposed to a dichotomy, of Northern and Southern scholarship in educational and social science. Below Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) critique the hegemonic production of knowledge in industrialised countries:

Our intention ... is not to reify theory, but to problematize a conception of theory that has little or no bearing on the lived realities of peoples whose academic and political interests are in contradiction to hegemonic social orders. Our goal is to contribute to the reformulation of an anti-colonial discursive framework that offers an understanding of social reality and practice as understood from the vantage point of the marginalized and subordinate (p. 298).

This view ignores the contested and complex nature of educational change in South Africa in terms of the theories, implicitly and explicitly stated, by the different writers in this book. Sharing common academic interests clearly has not meant that we have shared common views when it comes to what underpins individual interpretations of “the facts”, conclusions, and identification of the lessons supposedly learned, or the politics of change. We trust that the informed reader and citizen will profit from the intellectual diversity in our work. Perhaps more importantly, Dei and Asgharzadeh’s argument excludes the intellectual possibilities of building on and/or deconstructing knowledge developed in industrialised countries. Such knowledge is of course far from uniform or cast in stone. South African thinkers inside and outside the academe, in civil society and political organisations, have a long history of scholarship informed by what could broadly be described as critical traditions in “Western” thought. This is obviously not fortuitous; it has had everything to do with the history of opposition to apartheid. We would like to think that our work in this book draws upon these traditions, without slavishly emulating what like-minded researchers overseas do or have accomplished. Such a critical perspective not only applies to “academic and political interests” embedded in “hegemonic social orders,” but to the “lived realities” of “the marginalised and subordinate.” It moreover applies to our work and the acquisition of self-knowledge through self-reflection. If I were to co-ordinate this project again I would pay more attention to change as mass, organised struggle, that is, I would work harder at soliciting studies that evaluate teachers’ and students’ organisations and trade unions, as well as organisations in civil society that agitate for educational change from the grassroots in South Africa today. Comparative studies with the literature in North America on leadership as the arena of educational change (e.g. Fullan, 2001) might yield instructive, contrasting insights. It would shift attention away from the district office, the office
of the school principal or superintendent, to what goes on in the forums of ordinary folk and in the streets. At worst the writing on management portrays far-sighted leaders and policy-makers who have the power to define goals, deal with crises, and spearhead change (Stacey, 1995), generally paying scant attention to the web of human relationships that constitute organisational culture and micro-politics, or the victories and defeats of social activism.

Through the clash of ideas, we can make progress on the research and epistemological fronts in education and social science. Postcolonial writers and researchers on indigenous knowledge systems sometimes reify the knowledges, histories, and cultural practices produced in the South. We sing our own praises too much. No doubt because the Other has refused to acknowledge our achievements and the achievements of our ancestors. The power of critique can lay the foundations for better work and such knowledge can be integrated into civic life. Action, practitioner, and participatory research holds great potential in this regard because it questions the independence of science and its political and cultural location within the ivory tower. Its key advantage is that it looks beyond empirical description, categorisation, or analysis of data detached from society and everyday life. Its key disadvantage – sometimes – lies in the credibility of self-reported change and the unproblematic manner in which researchers stand in relation to research participants, organisations and communities. As the post-structuralists and post-modernists might complain: Who is interpreting what, where, how and through the medium of which relations of power, language, and discourses?

EDUCATION, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THE POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

In the field of Comparative and International Education there is tradition – a good one – of viewing developments in education as a function of national and international developments. What occurred or is occurring in education was or is closely related to developments in the nation state and the world. This has been the case in practice in South Africa, especially since introduction of apartheid schooling in the 1950s. Educational change in the country is, consequently, profoundly historical and political (see Samoff’s Foreword). The two decades of revolt following the anti-apartheid student rebellion in 1976 led to the attainment, after more than three centuries of national oppression, of black majority rule in 1994. There must be few such examples of dramatic shifts in national history in the world that have been driven by and anchored in social struggles in education.

Goodson and Marsch (1996) discuss how curriculum change in Europe has historically and in contemporary society been underpinned by social and political relations beyond the precincts of schools. With reference to Britain, they compare the position in 1904 to the National Curriculum of the 1980s, pointing out that there have been continuities that require explanation.

The 1904 Regulations embodied that curriculum historically offered to the grammar school clientele of the middle classes as opposed to the curriculum being developed in the Board Schools and aimed primarily at the working
classes: one segment or vision of the nation was being favoured at the expense of another. In the intervening period more egalitarian impulses brought about the creation of comprehensive schools where children of all classes came together under one roof. This in turn led to a range of curriculum reforms which sought to redefine and challenge the hegemony of the grammar school curriculum.

Seeking ... to challenge and redirect these reforms ... the political right has argued for the rehabilitation of the ‘traditional’ (i.e. grammar school) subjects. The National Curriculum [of 1988] can be seen as a political statement of the victory of the forces and intentions representing these political groups. A particular vision, a preferred segment of the nation has therefore been reinstated, prioritised, legislated and remythologized as ‘national’.

.... whilst a ‘victory’ for certain forces, this was only a victory in the first battle not the war and inevitably it was to prove a long war which continues to this day (p. 157).

Each of the problems analysed in the different chapters of this book can be seen as problems of history, and thus of the politics, economics, and sociology of the South African transition. Studying change in respect of what individuals (teachers and university students) think and do in classrooms and lecture halls, the stubborn, oppressive institutional cultures of tertiary institutions, the social relations in schools, or the bureaucratic functions and ideologies of education bureaucracies in South Africa means coming to terms with the past, through conflict and/or accommodation. For example, it is clear that Vandeyar’s teacher education programmes about diversity for teacher trainees have political significance for the next generation of white teachers and the future of desegregated schools. Similarly, the shifting power relations within schools and the rise of new elites and managerialism might be relevant to Jewish community schools, but, as Herman shows, they also have wider relevance and significance embedded within the dialectic of the global and the local. While Motala’s engagement with the contradictions of finance equality and equity is an esoteric, philosophical problem, it is also about imagining a post-apartheid education system that is more just than the one the new government inherited in 1994 and that persists to this day.

Conceptual frameworks and theories that historicise and politicise educational change and that argue that it is a social enterprise – in the broadest possible sense – are largely absent from the international change agenda in education. This has far-reaching consequences for policymaking and what occurs in reform projects and innovations whose goals and funding are aimed at the promotion of change in underdeveloped countries.

In this discourse the strongest imperatives are about the impetus for a global agenda in which fiscal discipline, limitations on the role of government through privatization of services, open access to developing economies, the
declaration as a tradable service, managerialism, narrow conceptions of efficiency, rates of return and cost production functions are the pervasive ideological interests in the motive processes of change.

Such influences moreover are derived from a pre-existing template of policy choices prescribed for countries regardless of the social and political histories, regional and national peculiarities, and specific needs. These overarching templates prescribe unrealistic and unachievable benchmarks culled from decontextualised experiences that are alleged to be universally applicable (Motala, 2003, p. 9).

An outdated, crudely positivist view of research that relies on technique, procedure, and reverence for number crunching, is associated with this thinking and practice about “development”. Consultancy reports in synchrony with a-priori, donor-specified “terms of reference”, are examples of these anti-intellectual discourses (see Samoff, 2003). Like the largest foreign-funded education programme in the post-apartheid period, USAID’s District Development Support Programme, these research reports neglect to engage in discussions about the purposes of education: To educate for an informed, critical citizenship? To prepare students for the labour market and workplaces created by the captains of industry? To develop personal abilities and skills? To master and construct disciplinary and trans-disciplinary knowledge? To live with the Other? To bring about social justice, to educate, to fight for liberation?

In the academic writing on educational change, positivism has been translated into empiricist research, “findings”, and “recommendations” that can be added in linear fashion to an existing knowledge base. “Best practices” can be identified and emulated. It has been pointed out often enough in North America that superficial education restructuring, typically with regard to governance, school programmes, and the organisation of the school day, has not necessarily changed school cultures or teachers’ classroom practices (see Elmore, 1995). In Chapter 15 Nieuwenhuis discusses how technical, linear compliance with centrally mandated change has dominated studies on organizational change in the modern era, and has underpinned education reform in post-apartheid South Africa.

Fink and Stoll (1998) identify four broad currents that have sought to promote change in industrialised countries: school effectiveness, school improvement, restructuring, and reculturing. Their survey is significant because it highlights in different ways how rational-linear and technical discourses about change have been woven into research and practice over at least four decades. Two famous publications in the United States were influential in giving rise to the school effectiveness movement: the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) and the study by Jencks et al. (1972). Both studies argued that students’ socio-economic backgrounds were decisive in determining academic success and failure. Schools did not matter, or mattered very little. The school effectiveness research in many countries sought to identify the characteristics and to measure the results of effective schools. It has often relied upon checklists and debatable instruments, like standardised tests and I.Q scores, in seeking to define and quantify educational
success. As Silbert points out in Chapter 9 the “correlates” of effective schools, divorced of their socio-political contexts, were compared with the corresponding correlates of ineffective schools. In response, the school improvement research therefore placed far greater emphasis on explaining the processes of school-based change over time. The more contemporary restructuring and reform movements have been well documented in the existing literature and all I shall do here is to sketch the general trajectory crudely. Characterised by politically manufactured crises in public education that have rarely existed, the ground has been laid for the marketisation of education. A centrally designed curriculum must serve the needs of a competitive national and global economy. Top-down accountability measures are introduced for schools (“naming and shaming”); high-stakes testing for students (league tables in Britain; grade 12 or matric results in South Africa). Teachers lose ideological and professional control of work through an intensification of their labour, technical control, and deskilling teaching. As teachers of top-performing schools in South Africa (and elsewhere) know, you teach to the test. Back to basics is stressed as opposed to say, an intellectual agenda that poses awkward questions about contemporary society and politics. Perhaps the great strength of the school effectiveness movement was its emphasis on the attainment of equity and equality of opportunity in societies deeply divided by class, race, and gender. The marketisation of education has become notorious for the achievement of the opposite: inequity and inequality.

Against these trends and broad currents it is worth mentioning leading-edge academic writing that has looked at the problem of change from very different perspectives. Hargreaves (1994) and Elliott (1996) have done pioneering work on the emotional dimensions of change, reminding us that schools are human institutions in which social relations are crucial (see also the Chapter by De Kock and Slabbert in this book). This builds on the school improvement research that drew attention to school and teacher development as the centre of change and that showed the importance of institutionalising change agendas and dynamic change processes (Hopkins, et al., 1994). Thus many of the studies critical of the reforms of the 1980s New Right governments and their present-day heirs have stressed the sociology of schools and the conditions and contexts of teaching. These developments constitute substantive advances in how we have come to analyse educational change. For example, in reviewing writing about teachers’ work and teacher staff development, Smyth (1998) says:

One trend is the rise of various forms of interpretive qualitative analysis of classroom interaction based on observation. Another is the emergence of the case study, which represents a shift in emphasis from a positivist concern about generalizability to a focus on texture and context. A third trend is the effort to examine the ways in which teachers understand and guide their own practice, as an example of reflective and contextualized knowledge that is practical rather than theoretical. As a result the field appears to have outgrown its early stress on law-seeking, abstraction from context, and prescription from practice ... (p. 1253).
Fullan (2003) explains the power of a school’s culture to influence professional learning and student achievement. He poses the difficult question of how “high-quality cultures” at schools can be brought to scale. The key to successful change is seen as improved relationships among teachers, between teachers and principals, and between teachers and students, and how these might be attained. Miller (1998) studied four schools and identifies the dimensions of school reculturing as follows:

The key elements that are described above – long term perspective, principal and teacher leadership, inquiry and reflection, outside supports and reference groups, focus on student learning, and attention to teacher development of a new way of doing business in schools. Separately, any one of two of these elements may exist in a school, and the school remains unchanged. Occurring together in a building, they are a powerful force that promotes the re-design of school, learning and teaching (p. 542).

Is the site of “deep” change reculturing teaching and school communities? To be sure school contexts matter (Weber, 2006), but so, more fundamentally, does the social and historical milieu, nationally and internationally, in which they develop, regress, or stagnate. Such analyses about change take us back to views about what education is for in the abstract and in reality. The recent literature on reculturing that grew out of the school improvement research can be enhanced by paying more attention to the relevance of these pre-eminently political discussions.

Positivist empiricism and its critiques have had far-reaching discursive implications for the concept of educational change, and international development programmes and donor funding that shape educational policies and practices in poor countries. There are also implications for classroom pedagogy and for modes of assessment. During the 1980s history teachers had to grade student essays by awarding marks for “facts” and “interpretation”. For every topic, there existed 50 recognisable facts that students were required to memorise and reproduce in examinations. The marks allotted for the interpretation of facts depended on the number of facts students listed in essays. For example, a student scored 80% for understanding why the white government in South Africa decided the nation should go to war to defend the British Empire in 1914 because s/he was able to list 40 out of 50 known facts about the reasons for the war.

The chapters in this book demonstrate that attempts to study and identify patterns and generalise about educational change inevitably result in discussions about the recognition of complexity and the place of the exceptional. This indeed has been one of the justifications for our work in regard to the relevant scholarship in rich countries and in regard to local developments and trends. The excerpt below is from an interview I conducted with a local teacher. She speaks in the idiom of the black township in which she lives and works, but what she says will, in spirit if not in the letter, resonate with the experiences of many teachers in North America and Australia:

Okay, you know, the people who formulate them are at the offices, up there at the Department of Education. You know, I don’t think they’ve got the slightest idea of what is happening in the classroom! Because most of their
policies are just ... they are not that practical! Most of them, you know. So they are very lovely policies in theory. You know, when you read them on paper, they’re lovely. But come into the classroom and try and implement them! It’s so difficult! For instance, they give you a class of 52. I’m a Science teacher; I need to conduct experiments you know. I have to take those kids to the laboratory and do experiments. And see to it that the experiments are done successfully and there are no hassles. I mean, you know Science! And how am I going to handle a group of 52 students? I’ve got 6 classes to handle! One class, 52. The other class is 53; the other one is 48. How do you handle that? And then they come and do their policy of staff establishment [i.e. government policies aimed at the redeployment and retrenchment of teachers] and they say we are overstaffed! Why do you have 52 students in a class and they tell you, you are overstaffed! To me it doesn’t make sense, you know?

One of the common topics in the writing on educational change in industrialised countries has been analysing how educational policy translates into practice. In South Africa, Motala and Pampallis (2007) argue that concentrating on education, or on “the problematisation and analysis of implementation by itself is inadequate”, because it does not “reckon with the limitations imposed by history and context” (p. 369). They are critical of “The expectation that educational interventions alone (through policy reform) can resolve the legacy of hundreds of years of colonial and racist rule ... since it attributes to educational policy powers of intervention which lie outside its range of possibilities” (p. 370). Their approach is to place current education crises within the context of the historical legacies of the apartheid state and the economy, especially during the 1980s. Recognising that some progress has been made since 1994, they nevertheless, argue that “the problems remain”. The macro-economic, market-friendly policies the new government has pursued, has exacerbated the racial and socio-economic inequities and inequalities it inherited in education and society. The analysis of education change should explain the forces at work within the education system in relation to “externalities” such as the nature of the apartheid state and the place of the post-apartheid state in the contemporary world system. In support of this view, one could, for example, state that fiscal austerity and the lack of human and institutional capacity are among the important factors that determine what the state can or cannot deliver at provincial and district levels. Also stressing the importance of globalisation, Chisholm (2004) has made the point that the post-apartheid state is far from monolithic, representing a variety of conflicting interests and groups. What has emerged in education has been a “new de-racialised middle class” who have benefitted most, even though this may not have been the policy goals or intentions. But, “drawing attention to class is not to say that the racial base has disappeared and class determines social outcomes ... Race, class and gender remain powerfully articulated” (p. 9).

Using a different approach, Kraak and Young (2001) divide the post-apartheid reform process into periods and, from an interpretation of various writings, state that the critical question is whether policy change is about the policies themselves or their implementation. Some writers have argued the policies are flawed while
others say the problem lies with their implementation. They see policy development in South Africa as a movement from the idealism that characterised the period immediately after the attainment of black majority rule, to a more realistic assessment of what can be achieved. Placing the emphasis on neither policy development nor implementation, Kraak and Young aver that educational reform lies at the intersection of political, curricular and administrative domains. Explanatory frameworks that stress these interrelationships will in their view be instructive.

The book edited by Sayed and Jansen (2001) argues that there has been a “gap” between idealistic policy texts during the post-apartheid period and the failure to implement them in schools and classrooms. The question which arises is how to explain and understand the dichotomy between policy and practice. They note, for example, that the discourse of post-apartheid education in regard the attainment of equity was and is contested. The meaning of equity therefore cannot be de-historicized or de-contextualized. In the same book Jansen asserts that the policy gap can best be explained as “political symbolism”. Non-change in education lies in the fact that state policy-making is about settling political struggles rather than solving educational problems. Thus schools have not changed and quality in education has not improved. In the conclusion, Sayed makes the point that the implementation problem is about discursive contradictions, continuities and discontinuities, and mediations that reflect the interests of the different actors that determine and contest policy development.

The relative autonomy, or the articulation of education on the one hand, and national development and social change on the other, can be seen in literature on policy change in South Africa over the last ten to fifteen years. I have tried to show that there is a pronounced tendency in much of the literature on educational change in rich countries and, more commonly, the ideas informing development programmes in poor countries, to abstract education from national and social development. Some explanations for “the implementation problem” in South Africa look at it against a broad historical, political and social backdrop, while others focus more sharply on the independence of the educational domain. The different chapters of this book can be read as variations of these abstractions and understandings (see also Chapter 18). What is the role of education in reproducing and changing society under specific conditions?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

At the start the writers of this book brainstormed several researchable and instrumental questions to guide and give direction to our work. How does educational change happen within transition societies? How is educational change in transitional societies different from educational change in stable or established societies? Why is change so difficult? What are the factors propelling change in education systems? What are those factors that restrain change? What can we learn about (educational) change from a study of continuity? What are the qualities of change? When does change become transformation? Can different kinds of change
be discerned – and if so, how is such change characterised in the literature? How do we know that change has happened? What are the historical antecedents to change that helps to explain the pace and direction of change? Do people change their behaviours first and their beliefs later – or do they first change their beliefs and then their behaviours? Is spontaneous change different from planned or deliberate change? Who should lead the process of educational change and how? What is the role of leadership in educational change? Who loses and who gains from the process of change – and can this kind of interest help us predict the chances of change? How is superficial change different from deep change? What is required for sustainable change as opposed to one-off change events? What are the unintended consequences of change, and are such consequences always negative? What role does culture play in the possibility of change? Are certain cultures (such as institutional cultures) more change-favourable than other cultures? What explains high levels of (educational) performance in limited-resource contexts? Can cultures be changed, and if so, how? What kind of change is more desirable in educational systems – incremental change or large-scale changes? To what extent is educational change possible without corresponding social changes? Put differently, what is the relationship between social and educational change? Is top-down change more effective than bottom-up change? Is a stakeholder model of change more effective and efficient than a management model of change?

Through our search for answers to these generic questions, some of which were discarded or adapted, several overarching themes emerged. We start the book by problematising teachers’ classroom practices and their decision-making frames in teaching science and mathematics. We discuss teacher education programmes and focus on the personal professional development of student teachers at tertiary level. This is followed by case studies of different schools against the backdrop of globalisation and the problematic transformation of higher education. We analyse issues related to “big” change: changing the ideologies within the state bureaucracy, decentralization in education governance, and tracing patterns of finance within the education system over the last decade. Finally, we attempt to tie it all together and to focus on one of the most important problems within the schooling system in South Africa, the quality of student learning. We address what cuts across the studies in the book by trying to define the relationship between national development and educational change and the nature of the transition in South African education. Below is an overview of each of the chapters.

**CURRICULUM, TEACHERS’ CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND THEIR CONCEPTIONS OF WORK**

Newton Stoffels examines why classroom practices are hard to change. Against the background of the implementation of the post-apartheid, outcomes-based curriculum reforms, he critiques popular scholarship that explains policy failure in terms of resources or teacher resistance to imposed reform. Resources are obviously different in industrialised countries when compared with poor countries, or countries like South Africa where “First” and “Third” World conditions are like
the difference between night and day. Stoffels takes an in-depth look at the decision-making frames of two science teachers, in contexts with contrasting resources, and demonstrates how these teachers gravitate towards commercially prepared texts to make strategic decisions. Pre- and post lesson interviews, as well as videotaped classroom observations point, firstly, to the multi-faceted and personal nature of teachers’ decision-making and professional identities. Secondly, his research demonstrates that the inability of the teachers to exercise their considerable decision-making authority is a function of the intensification of their work and increased workloads. Thirdly, he questions the oft-articulated and reductionist assumption that teachers with access to better resources, that is mostly teachers in the former whites-only schools, are more responsive to educational change than teachers in poor schools.

Annemarie Hattingh interrogates issues of validity regarding curriculum alignment when planning and assessing curriculum change in developing countries. She reports on the results of a large-scale study of the achievements of learners in Grades 8 and 9 in a rural province against the backdrop of the implementation of the reformed science curriculum. The discrepancy between the achievement results and performance observed during in-depth case studies of the same learners leads her to question two issues of validity regarding curriculum alignment. One of the validity concerns that arises when attempting to understand the extent of change deals with the possible misalignment of assessment methods with the intended policy on the one hand, and the implemented or experienced curriculum on the other. The other validity issue concerns the (mis)alignment between the intended curriculum and the cultural values of teachers. Since cultural values are deeply personal and inform pedagogical practice, no reform process can ignore the values of the change agents, namely, the teachers. In educational change, a teacher’s role is central and change theories which ignore the personal domain are bound to end up wide of their target. The chapter concludes with a critique of the common “chain of change in personal matters” (Sheehy, 1981) that describes change in the personal domain. Hattingh suggests how a re-conceptualisation of the common change process in favour of a building on instead of letting go conceptual frame, may procure a significant alignment of the intended, implemented, and experienced curriculum in science.

John Rogan’s chapter grapples with the question of how much curriculum change is appropriate in a given context and within a given timeframe. How can a balance be struck between stagnation, on the one hand, and the promotion of unrealistic innovation and expectations usually found in policy documents on the other? Curriculum developers and practitioners in South Africa will recognise this as a familiar systemic problem and Rogan formulates a realistic strategy to address it. In answer to the dilemma, he develops the concept of a Zone of Feasible Innovation (ZFI), drawing on the literature of school development, teacher professional development, and of developmental psychology, particularly the work of Vygotsky. A series of procedures are proposed to help define the nature and scope of a ZFI in any given situation, and promote local control and capacity building. Rogan has his feet firmly on the ground and writes with careful attention
to the prevailing conditions under which curriculum change is being implemented in most South African schools. A common criticism of government policies has been that they represent idealistic goals with few prospects or, according to the cynics, intentions of being implemented in the first place.

In Chapter 5 Hayley Barnes states that professional development courses in mathematics education commonly focus on instructing teachers about the new curriculum and attempting to change their classroom practices. However, few of these courses challenge teachers’ beliefs with regard to mathematics as a discipline, or consider how such conceptions may influence teaching. She examines this problem within the context of a study carried out as an evaluation of an intervention for mathematics teachers. Data were collected from 1 104 learners and 18 teachers from 12 schools. The evaluation of this intervention concluded that its immediate goals had been achieved. However, it is argued that this change was not deep enough because there was no observable shift in teachers’ understandings or practices to a more constructivist, inquiry-based, or problem-solving approach in mathematics classrooms. This personal dimension of teacher change is analysed either as an “enabler” or a barrier in working towards more fundamental reculturing, rather than superficial restructuring in mathematics education. Data from the innovation showed that the predominant view of teachers was an instrumentalist one: mathematics was seen as a collection of facts, rules, procedures, and skills. Similarly, limited changes were observed in classrooms. Barnes argues that conceptions of mathematics are critical to bringing about more sustainable and fundamental change in mathematics education.

TEACHER EDUCATION: TEACHER-TRAINEES BELIEFS, PRACTICES, AND PROGRAMMES OF CHANGE

Thea De Kock and Johannes Slabbert discuss the human aspect of change as a personal transformation process. Their work is to prepare new generations of teachers in teacher education programmes at university. They show that the learning process is not linear or clearly defined, but unfolds as a chaotic, often traumatic onslaught on existing social, personal and group identities, belief systems, knowledge, and competencies. They analyse the dynamics of students’ personal transformation as part of their professional development as student-teachers. Against the background of concerns about the quality of education in general and a new political and educational dispensation in South Africa, De Kock and Slabbert have gained insights into the “what” and “how” of the design and implementation of education programmes geared towards teaching and learning for change in a society in transition. They use decades of teaching experience to self-reflect on and learn from the teacher courses they have taught at tertiary level.

Saloshna Vandeyar tackles the heart of apartheid schooling: the legacies of race and racism, difference, and diversity, in preparing student teachers to teach in integrated schools. Can student teachers change their ingrained beliefs about diversity? Using case studies drawn from everyday classroom practice and field-based assignments, she examines incoming attitudes and beliefs of white students,
and the extent to which their perspectives on difference are amenable to change through teaching on the subject. Findings from this study indicate that white student teachers are diverse in their attitudes, beliefs, and strategies for dealing with diversity; and that teacher education programmes can challenge and change pre-existing attitudes and beliefs of student-teachers towards diversity. Vandeyar notes that the scholarly literature tells us that if change attempts are to be successful, individuals and groups must find meaning concerning what should change as well as how to go about it. In the South African context there is much literature on what should change, but there is very little on what strategies and programmes can be implemented to effect change in student-teachers’ beliefs about diversity. The educational literature underscores the centrality of the personal domain of the teacher in sustaining educational change. The chapter illustrates that the concept of identity is a social, historical, and generational construct that is unstable and susceptible to change. It shows how change can be sustained in the personal domain of the teacher through teaching and learning about diversity at university.

Carol van der Westhuizen describes the urgent need for improvement in teacher education programmes through well-structured, school-based components. Her research reports on an investigation into an undergraduate final year school-based internship at university. The research design is a case study with elements of ethnography and action research. The world under scrutiny is that of teachers in training (including teacher educators), and by implication, the school culture for which they are being trained. She focuses on the implementation and impact of an innovative school-based teaching practice (internship) programme in an undergraduate school within a faculty of education and on the experiences of student-teachers, school mentors (mentor-teachers) and teacher-educators (mentor-lecturers). The chapter describes the power relations between the student-teacher, the mentor-teacher and the mentor-lecturer. It highlights the most significant facets of the programme, namely mentorship, collaboration, and reflection. Data includes records of meetings, questionnaires, reflection notes, and records of discussions. The roles of the participants are analysed and the most significant features of the programme are highlighted. Van Der Westhuizen concludes with a discussion of practical suggestions for the improvement of the teacher education programme she used as a case study in the chapter, a call for more research and better understanding on how power relations in teacher education work, and draws attention to the policy implications of her analyses.

**CHANGING SCHOOLS: DIVERSITY AND THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL**

In Chapter 9 Patti Silbert critiques the School Effectiveness and School Improvement literatures and clarifies ways in which both paradigms are extricated conceptually, methodologically, and practically from the social, historical, and political context. Despite the historical separation of the School Effectiveness and School Improvement movements, she argues that a synthesis of approaches would augment both the knowledge base and operational practice integral to both traditions. This requires a
re-conceptualisation of both movements which would enable more contextually specific school improvement strategies to be implemented. Against this background, the complexity of educational change is explored in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of what constitutes effective school reform. Educational change is problematised from a micro (practice), and a macro (policy) level. An analysis of lessons learned from School Effectiveness and School Improvement initiatives illuminates new directions for school reform. There is an urgent need, in the South African context, for an active, effective ‘whole school’ approach that addresses diversity. Silbert argues that the omission of diversity management as a key area for contemporary Whole School Evaluation policy initiatives implies that schools are not compelled to integrate this in any formalised way. This ought to be challenged, as it is this policy that currently establishes the framework for school development in South African schools. The management of diversity demands that schools articulate the location of the individual learner within a specific social, cultural, historical, and political context. This perspective is presently overlooked as situational specificity is eclipsed by international policy borrowing, the implication of which is that education policies are not sufficiently grounded in the learner’s context. The need to provide an educational model for a society in transformation demands that the National Education policy prioritises diversity management at all levels of the school.

Chaya Herman asks: How do community schools in transitional and unstable contexts restructure their educational system in response to internal and external change dynamics? She argues that powerful and concurrent change processes – some global, some local, as they are interlinked with the historical characteristics of a community – may impede the community’s capacity to manage educational change, and may impel it to seek a linear, quick-fix solution to complex ideological, political and social forces. Furthermore, in times of rapid change from an oppressive past to an inclusive democracy and open society, new power elites may seize the moment of identity and political uncertainty to reintroduce authoritarianism, thus mimicking the previous social order. This chapter is based on a larger research project that explores the profound effects of the ideological and managerial restructuring of Jewish community schools in Johannesburg, South Africa (Herman, 2006). Theoretically, the restructuring evolved through the interaction between two prevailing global dynamics: the one is the force towards neo-liberalism with its attendant notions of marketisation and managerialism; and the other is the force towards the resurgence of ethnic and religious (often fundamentalist) communities in the search for identity. The specific way in which this confluence of forces was mediated in the local context seemed to provide the only feasible solution for a minority, previously privileged, white community that felt trapped in the vortex of major changes in the new South Africa. The allure of certainty offered by the discourses of both managerialism and fundamentalism could not be turned down by the community as it struggled to define and redefine its identity. Yet as this chapter demonstrates, clenching on to managerialism and fundamentalism was an “act of faith” that failed to provide the community with certainty. Rather, their cumulative effect polarised the community and shifted it
towards ghettoisation and exclusivity. These dynamics can be found in other schools that are grappling, perhaps in different measures, with the same problem of god and markets. The chapter raises important questions about the role of religious education in the new South Africa.

Everard Weber looks at change in teachers’ work regarding management at a school he calls Tshwane High, situated in the South African township, Mamelodi. How do we explain power relations, the hidden and open struggles, and cooperation between senior and junior faculty? What do they tell us about the political conditions and contexts of teachers’ work at the grassroots? What can we learn from such a study in relation to the scholarship on teachers’ work? Opposing forces drive educational change in the working lives of teachers at Tshwane High. Global influences are evident in the implementation of managerial accountability. National forces are present in the prevailing democratic cultures in governance and management, a product of historical change in South African society and its education systems. The balance of these forces is in a state of flux, with no definitive outcomes. Change forces influencing managerial relations are “reculturing” teachers’ workplaces. The determining variable is school-based politics around a variety of parochial, educational, and social problems. Top-down policy change implemented through the state bureaucracy thus articulates intricately with existing culture, history, human agency, and institutional politics. The literature on teachers’ work is instructive in explaining the deteriorating conditions of teachers’ work in industrialised countries, locating them within the transformed labour process of teaching over the last twenty-five years. However, these analytic tools have not adequately explored the interrelationships of the global, the national, and the grassroots, as the case study of teachers’ work at Tshwane High shows.

HIGHER EDUCATION: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES, AND TRANS-DISCIPLINARY DISCOURSES

In Chapter 12 Gerda Bender discusses community engagement in South African higher education. There has been a much more concerted focus on it currently as a national policy option for a society in transition, and as a criterion for auditing and scholarship development. Most universities’ mission statements identify community service as part of the universally recognised functions of a modern university, namely teaching, research and community engagement. Bender uses reflective inquiry and critical content analysis to understand the politics, processes, and challenges in the community engagement movement, from a predominantly philanthropic orientation to a scholarship of engagement. A crucial question is whether higher education institutions in South Africa are committed to curricular community engagement. Have higher education institutions (HEIs) changed from a philanthropic or community service orientation to a scholarship of engagement? She discusses community and civic engagement internationally, followed by an explanation of national higher education policies and the recognition of institutional cultures and surveys the changes in the community engagement
Everard Weber

movement in South Africa between 1997 and 2007. A conceptual framework for community engagement is proposed and Academic Service-Learning (ASL) is indicated as an appropriate educational philosophy, which is a vehicle for change in curriculum-related community engagement at HEIs in South Africa. Change that promotes academic excellence such as ASL is becoming a central part of institutional change at many HEIs in South Africa. This is significant because academic staff members are pivotal to higher education, and their involvement is essential if ASL is to be embedded in academic cultures and programmes. As a vehicle for change, ASL includes greater institutional engagement and responsiveness to community and social needs. The research university ought to address this by institutionalising ASL and making the curriculum responsive to these needs.

Venitha Pillay addresses how the past influences and shapes what changes and how this happens today at what used to be the whites-only, predominantly Afrikaans-speaking University of Pretoria. She argues that what was expressed through understandings of institutional culture, and the vision for change, needs to consciously seek terrains of mutual interaction conducive to change. She suggests that dominant aspects of institutional culture at the university, such as its hierarchical, top-down decision-making processes as opposed to, for example, collegial authority, need to serve the change agenda, not thwart it. While dominant aspects of the institutional culture may also be the subject of a change agenda, their presence and dominance cannot be ignored, nor can they be cast outside the package of possible change mechanisms. These dominant features of the institution should be harnessed into strategies to transform the institutional cultures effectively. At present, limited efforts at decentralisation and more participatory modes of decision-making emerge from and are directed by the centralised management authority. The management and leadership of the institution should be located outside its dominant cultures for fundamental change to occur. Put differently, can white men in top (and middle) management positions who attained their present status and authority under apartheid, spearhead tertiary transformation in the new South Africa? The data show that the largely white management at the University of Pretoria were upbeat about how they were changing the institution, whereas the black academic staff members were cynical about their efforts and/or leaving the institution. If a hierarchical academic culture is the object of the change process, it may also function as a means for the change process, provided the change process is lead by individuals who are outside the dominant institutional culture. According to Pillay “... appointing leaders who are cultural outsiders but who nevertheless carry hierarchical authority, may be valuable.”

Cecelia Jacobs discusses the importance of creating discursive spaces within the academy that transcend disciplinary boundaries, where the commonality underpinning the collective is a shared identity as professional educators, rather than the separate disciplinary identities that more often underpin working groups of academics. She argues that educational change of any significance comes about through a process of personal development of individual educators within a broader social context that enables such individuals to engage with colleagues about the
meaning of change, and identifies the absence of such a social context and discursive space at higher education institutions as a problem of change. The findings presented and analysed in this chapter emphasise the importance of creating trans-disciplinary discursive spaces within higher education that would enable academics to reconfigure how they construct their roles and identities within higher education institutions. The study shows that three factors and associated processes, namely transdisciplinary engagement, collaborative interactions, and academic identity construction, are key in the change process. The findings further suggest that discursive spaces in higher education need to provide both ‘iziko’ (a physical space around which ‘academic’ communities can gather) and ‘eziko’ (processes through which ‘academic’ communities provide nourishment, sustenance and shared learning through dialogue with one another). ‘Eziko’ characterises the spirit of connectedness, humility, and respect that should underpin the interaction of diverse and often dissonant disciplinary perspectives that occur when academics across disciplines make collective meaning of change. The chapter challenges higher education institutions to mobilise towards the creation of sustainable ‘iziko’ that cut across disciplinary boundaries, and for academics to become the architects of ‘eziko’ which enable them to explore change collectively and individually through the development of shared meaning.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE: STATE BUREAUCRACIES, SCHOOL GOVERNANCE, AND FINANCE

Jan Nieuwenhuis critiques the idea that organisational change is a mechanistic process. He argues it has a deeper personal dimension that is often overlooked and ignored. Too often it is assumed that organisations, particularly bureaucratic state institutions, achieve technical compliance when it comes to the introduction of new policies and regulations, without really engaging with the underlying assumptions, values, and beliefs of staff that must implement these new policies. Fundamental to this phenomenon are ideas claiming that managers can be successful at implementing organisational change by coercing, rewarding, or talking people into change. This chapter proposes that one cannot manage change successfully in these ways. One may achieve technical compliance (i.e. meeting the requirements of policy), but not substantive change (i.e. change in people’s perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs). Change cannot be managed from the outside, as classic management theories want us to believe. Change lies within people, through professional development based upon democratic ideals and basic human rights. Drawing from research into experiences of organisational change in education in South Africa the chapter develops a number of broad parameters within which change from within could be nurtured.

Veerle Dieltiens writes that School Governing Bodies (SGBs), as representative forms of democratic governance at school level, are intended to transform the education system at its foundations by facilitating the participation of parents, educators, learners, and non-teaching staff in the decisions affecting schools. The expectation in the policy discourse is that greater participation will deepen
democracy and enhance social justice. It has, however, been argued that decentralisation of authority has not worked to enhance democratic participation because SGBs function as implementing agents of pre-determined government policy rather than as independent change agents. Moreover, because SGBs act as legitimating forums for setting and collecting school fees, social justice principles are subordinated to neo-liberal concerns with payment and efficiency. This chapter relies on the findings of six case studies to present evidence that counters both the policy ambition that SGBs are instruments of social justice and the argument that they are empty vessels into which policy is accepted without question. The examples from the case studies show that SGBs take decisions based on historical precedent, traditional norms, and a realist economic rationality, which do not necessarily conform to social justice principles. Government policy and its critics have ignored the ideologies, cultures, and practices of the street bureaucrats. SGBs bring their own ideas to meetings where change is negotiated and sometimes contested. The chapter illustrates this regarding the empirical material drawn from the case studies. It calls for more research to understand better how elected representatives mould government goals and policy.

If the one side of the apartheid education coin was race, the other was inequality. In Chapter 17, Shireen Motala reviews recent quantitative and qualitative research on equity and school finance in South Africa. She seeks to describe the patterns and topography of inequality in post-apartheid South Africa and engage with the concept of equity from the point of view of social justice. She discusses the relevant legislation and policies that frame finance equity reforms and their implementation in the provinces. She argues that while significant progress has been made in the redistribution of resources through finance equity formulas and mechanisms, the level of redress has not been sufficient to address past inequities and historical backlogs in a meaningful way. Furthermore, the redistribution of resources and the level of redistribution have occurred based on the assumption that there would be greater effectiveness and efficiency of spending. The location of redress within macro-economic and fiscal goals highlights the tension between fiscal stabilization policies and meeting the demands of social development and democracy. She states that certain policies, such as private inputs into public education and the notion of devolution and self-managing schools, require critical review if there is to be greater democratic transformation within the system.

In the final chapter Crain Soudien and Dave Gilmour revisit some of the important aims of this book, suggest areas for further research, and discuss the issue of quality as an important problem within the education system. They start by asking what can be said about the meaning of educational change in South Africa in the light of the various studies in the book. What do these studies tell us about the nature of the transition in education today? How do national development and historical evolution on the one hand, relate to educational change and developments in South African education on the other? The chapter then makes the argument that one of the major difficulties confronting the reform process in the country is understanding why quality is so difficult to achieve in those parts of
the system that catered for people who were classified black in the apartheid era.

"Is the system able to recognize and respect the child who brings to the school the
experience of poverty and a history of racial discrimination?" Without this
understanding, Soudien and Gilmour suggest, reform initiatives will continue to be
compromised, participation in terms of access has not and will not be translated
into learning achievement. This discussion begins with a presentation of the results
of attainment tests conducted at Grades 3 and 6 levels in South Africa and
concludes with an assessment of what these mean for an analysis of the quality
problem in the country. The argument is made that the state in effect produces and
reproduces inequities because its modern curriculum does not, epistemologically,
cater for the majority of black students. For this to occur far greater attention needs
to paid to the ‘‘A’’ factors: the apartheid legacy, ambiguity in policy, or amnesia
about the past ...” rather than interventions aimed at, for example, managerial
efficiency or teacher development, as important as these may be.

REFERENCES


EVERARD WEBER


Everard Weber  
Senior Researcher  
Education Policy Unit, School of Education  
University of the Witwatersrand
Section B    Curriculum and Pedagogy
NEWTON STOFFELS

2. WHY DO TEACHERS DO WHAT THEY DO?

*Teacher decision-making in the context of curriculum change in South Africa*

**INTRODUCTION**

Large-scale curriculum reform aimed at altering teachers’ pedagogical assumptions, teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment strategies, is extremely difficult to achieve (Spillane and Zeuli, 1999; Fullan, 1991). There is, for example, substantial evidence from both developed and developing contexts, that change efforts to transform teachers’ instructional practices from a traditional teacher-centred to a more learner-centred approach, have been largely sporadic (Tabuluwa, 1997; Spillane and Zeuli, 1999). The pervasiveness of this ‘implementation problem’ prompted McLaughlin (1998, p. 70) to pose the question: Why are classroom practices so hard to change?

In trying to find answers to this puzzle, scholars have focused in various ways on teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, prior experience, context, conditions of work, and so forth, to find out how these factors impact and shape their classroom practices (Smyth, 2001; McLaughlin, 1998). Despite the extensive research on this topic, the question remains. More importantly, our understanding of when, why and how teachers change or do not change their practices in developing, politically changing Southern African contexts, is still very limited. In the light of current progressive educational policies in the Southern African region, it is alarming that there is still much that we do not know about teacher change, and the factors and forces which constrain or enable curriculum policy implementation. Following Tobin, Kahle and Fraser (1990), it seems then that a more apposite phrasing of the ‘implementation problem’ is: *Why do teachers do what they do?* This implies accessing the decision-making forces that shape what teachers do. For example, Mitchell and Koedinger (2000, p. 20) contend that “… previous efforts at curriculum and instructional reform have fallen short partly because reformers neglected to consider the decision-making processes of teachers”. Such a cognitive approach (Shulman, 1990, p. 62) to studying curriculum change is premised on two assumptions. Firstly, the classroom actions and behaviours of teachers are to a large extent shaped by their thoughts, judgements, and decisions (Borko, Livingston and Shavelson, 1990, p. 40). Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002, p. 391) concur that, “behavioural changes have a fundamental cognitive component”. Secondly, the study of teacher thinking and decision-making, together with the
context in which they operate, provides a better understanding of why teachers do what they do in their classrooms (Woods, 1996).

In this chapter, the dialogical link between teacher change and teacher decision-making, and the question of why classroom practices are so hard to change, is pursued within the context of the radical curriculum change process embarked upon by post-apartheid South Africa (Department of Education, 1997). Under apartheid, the curriculum handed down to teachers for implementation was very prescriptive, content-heavy, detailed and authoritarian, with little opportunity for teacher initiative (Weber, 2006; Jansen, 1999). Classroom practice abounded with learner passivity, rote-learning, and chalk-and-talk teacher presentations (Christie, 1993). The National Department of Education marked the break from the apartheid curriculum with the introduction of an ambitious innovation that promised comprehensive curriculum change (Department of Education, 1997). Curriculum 2005 (C2005), so called because it was envisaged that it would be completely implemented and practiced by all compulsory school grades by the year 2005, was built around the philosophical principles of outcomes-based education (OBE). The new emphasis on ‘outcomes’ instead of input, on learner-centredness instead of teacher-centredness, and on active instead of passive learning, signalled a revolutionary new way of teaching and learning in South African classrooms. Teachers were expected to have a more facilitative role, and to employ a variety of teaching and assessment strategies, based on learners’ experiences and needs. In the minds of the policy-makers, this would afford teachers greater autonomy, responsibility, and flexibility to plan and facilitate lessons. This policy intent of greater teacher decision-making authority is captured as follows:

The new curriculum does not provide detail about content...Educators are recognised as professionals who can make curriculum decisions...and who do not have to rely on the dictates of a centrally devised syllabus (Department of Education, undated, p. 25).

In the light of the greater decision-making discretion of South African teachers implementing the new outcomes-based curriculum, this chapter sets out to identify and analyse the main decision-making frames that shape their classroom practices. Moreover, given the vast contextual differences that still exist between schools and the oft-articulated reductionist perception that teachers in well-resourced schools are more amenable to change, I question whether differential resources necessarily imply differential implementation. Consider, for example, Christie’s (1999, p. 5) prediction that: “better resourced, historically privileged schools are more likely to manage the new policies than historically disadvantaged, mainly black schools”. Is this really the case?

RESEARCH ON TEACHER DECISION-MAKING

A significant body of scholarship casts teaching as essentially a decision-making enterprise (Westerman, 1991; Calderhead, 1987). Research over the last two decades on the thoughts and decision-making that shape teachers’ actions have
largely had three foci. The first line of inquiry, which flourished in the 1980s, derives from the assumption that the mode of teacher thinking and decision-making during a lesson is qualitatively different from that before and after the lesson. Shulman (1990, p. 57) also advises that, “…to understand adequately the choices teachers make in classrooms, the grounds for their decision … we must study their thought processes before, during and after teaching.” A number of teacher cognition studies (Calderhead, 1987; Shulman, 1990) proposed three stages of decision-making, namely pre-active, interactive, and post-active.

The second line of research revolves around the differences between the decision-making of expert and novice teachers. Several studies have shown that the planning of experienced teachers is richer and more detailed, and reflects more selective prowess in their use of different resources than that of their inexperienced colleagues (Borko and Livingston, 1989). Similarly, Westerman (1991) provided evidence that expert teachers showed a much greater sensitivity to the individual needs and abilities of their learners and a greater ability to integrate and link new subject matter with what has gone before.

The third line of research, which also forms the backbone of this study, concerns the range, intensity, and interaction of the various factors that influence or shape teachers’ curricular decisions. These include the context in which teachers operate (Gwimbi and Monk, 2003), teachers’ beliefs and values about instruction (Clark and Peterson, 1986), teachers’ epistemological worldviews (Schraw and Olafson, 2002), the nature of the curricular content, and teachers’ specialised content knowledge and how to teach it to learners (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). The degree to which each of these affect teacher decisions at any particular time varies. This probably explains the inconsistencies in teachers’ reports of the major influences on their own curriculum decisions. In Sardo-Brown’s (1990) study, the factors that most frequently affected the instructional planning decisions of the respondents include their personal beliefs, the need to maintain learner attention, a quest to achieve the goal of the lesson, and the need to maintain an orderly transition between activities. Interestingly, the teachers in her study reported manuals and textbooks as the least influential decision-making factors. In contrast, in Shavelson and Stern’s (1981) study, respondent teachers reported that consideration of learners’ abilities was the major influence on their planning deliberations.

The notion that there are multiple influences on how curricula are translated into classroom practices, is consonant with Posner’s (1995, following Lundgren) argument that an array of “frame factors” shape, limit, or constrain the curriculum changes envisaged for schools. These include, for example, temporal, political, economic, cultural, and personal influences. In this analysis of the various factors that impacted on the curricular choices that teachers make, I evoke the notion of decision-making frames. This is in line with my employment of Posner’s notion of the frame factors that shape curriculum practice.

A major limitation to the scholarly work on teacher decision-making is that it has largely focused on elementary teachers (Sardo-Brown, 1990, p. 58). Furthermore, most qualitative classroom research on curriculum change has been
conducted in the area of mathematics (Cohen, 1990; Spillane and Zeuli, 1999), rather than science (Tobin, Kahle and Fraser, 1990). Moreover, the literature on teacher decision-making, in whatever discipline, has also been limited to first world contexts, with very little on developing countries (Brodie, 2000).

STUDY CONTEXT
This chapter focuses on the decision-making frames that impacted the change efforts of two Grade 9 Natural Science teachers engaged in the implementation of C2005. During the fieldwork year (2003), Grade 9 teachers were in their second year of implementing C2005 and Grade 9 was the highest school grade implementing the new curriculum at the time. These two black male teachers taught at different schools in Pretoria East. Martin, who taught at the previously disadvantaged ‘coloured’ school, had a 4-year composite science education degree and ten years of science teaching experience. He majored in Mathematics and Education, and studied Chemistry and Physics up to second-year level. At the commencement of this research (2003), he was in his third year of teaching at Murrayfield High, which, according to the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) grading system, was categorised as ‘moderately resourced,’ although it frequently happened that the materials that he needed to use were either not in stock or not in good working order. Martin was very conversant with the post-apartheid curriculum reform efforts, and attributed this to the fact that he had just completed – and thoroughly enjoyed – a one-year OBE course at a local university.

Thabo, who was the first black teacher at the previously advantaged white Pendle High School, had been in the teaching profession for five years. He had taught Grades 8 and 9 Natural Science at Pendle High School for two-and-a-half years. Consistent with the GDE grading as a well-resourced school, Pendle’s website portrays the school laboratories as “large, well equipped and well stocked.” Thabo clearly considered it a boon to teach at a school which had “almost everything” and where “you did not have to crack your head to improvise, because everything was there”.

The comparative case study of the two respondents’ decision-making, was premised on a series of biographical interviews, classroom observations of one Grade 9 class, as well as pre-lesson, post-lesson, and stimulated recall interviews (Woods, 1996).

FINDINGS: FACTORS IMPACTING ON CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING
In this section the factors that impact on Martin and Thabo’s curricular decision-making frames are discussed. Although most of the factors influenced both teachers in similar ways, there were some instances of differential effects. There is extensive scholarship contending that teacher decision-making is a very personal, situational process (Johnston, 1990; Woods, 1996), which was evident in the way that particular frame factors had varying effects on Thabo and Martin, and in the way that some decision-making frames applied to one, but not the other. Schmidt
et al, (1987, p. 454), in their study of eighteen Michigan teachers, also found that “not all teachers will respond to the same types of pressures, nor were they responsive in the same ways”.

**The new ‘outcomes-based’ learning support material**

Without doubt, the most significant finding from this research was that for both teachers the dominant and pervasive influence on their curricular decision-making and classroom practice was the learner support material (LSM) that their respective schools had recently acquired, namely SciGuide. This was a new, commercially-prepared text that was theoretically consonant with the new outcomes-based principles of C2005. In both target schools, this LSM replaced the traditional content-heavy science textbooks that were used extensively before the national curriculum change. The SciGuide set comprises a separate Learner Support Book, Learner Activity Book and a Teacher’s Guide. The Learner Activity Support Book consists of a number of learner activities, primarily in the form of worksheets aimed at discovery learning, on the content, concepts and principles covered in the Learner Support Book. The latter therefore resembles the traditional textbook, although not as bulky and content-heavy. The Teacher Support Book essentially comprises a set of memoranda of the various worksheets, providing the teacher with the correct answers as well as enrichment notes.

At Martin’s school, which serves learners from historically disadvantaged communities where parents were mostly unable to pay the annual school fee of R400, learners were not expected to buy the SciGuide series. In practice, this meant that Martin essentially had to either copy different worksheets for all the learners or, as often happened, when there was no photocopy paper available at the school, he had to transcribe the activity on the chalkboard. At Thabo’s school, which is in a prestigious area, and where most parents typically can afford the annual school fee of R7000, all the Grade 9 learners were expected to purchase the SciGuide series at a cost of R650. In the Grade 9B class that I observed, all the learners had both the SciGuide Learner Activity Book and the Learner Support Book. In practice, this meant that Thabo did not have the challenge of making regular photocopies or transcribing the worksheets on the chalkboard.

As indicated earlier, the new outcomes-based curriculum affords South African teachers considerable autonomy in planning and designing appropriate, needs-based learning programmes, within the broad parameters of the critical and specific outcomes, as well as the specified four strands of C2005 Natural Science curriculum. C2005, in principle at least, provides teachers with the flexibility to select and sequence content according to the interests, developmental levels, and needs of learners. However, both teachers had resolved to primarily follow the pattern of the LSM, to a large extent using it in a mechanical and imitative manner. This meant that, apart from a few deviations from the SciGuide texts, both respondents adopted and replicated its choice of critical and specific outcomes, themes, topics, content sequence, worksheets and, to some extent, assessment
strategies. This could be seen in the way they repeatedly explained that they were
doing particular topics because it was “next-in-line” in the SciGuide books.

Both respondents used the SciGuide’s ready-for-use worksheets extensively,
primarily as classroom exercises after a ten- to twenty-minute introductory teacher
talk on the day’s lesson content. Thabo, whose learners all had both the support
book and the activity book, consistently had them complete the activity worksheets
in class. These mostly entailed ‘fill-in-the-blank’ questions. Martin, whose learners
did not have the SciGuide texts, either photocopied (when the school had paper) or
transcribed the worksheet content on the chalkboard for learners to write down.

At this juncture, I wish to draw attention to a very important issue that sheds
light on the respondents’ extensive use of the SciGuide books. The first issue
relates to the assertive way in which they agreed with the OBE principle that
teachers should not be textbook bound. Thabo’s assertion, for example, that “this
book is not my Bible” succinctly captures their espoused belief, that under the new
instructional dispensation teachers should not be too text-bound in their lesson
planning. Both Thabo and Martin certainly demonstrated a theoretical
understanding of the C2005/OBE message that the conventional approach of
“teaching from the textbook” should be abandoned. Yet, in practice, they were now
“teaching from the LSM”. This was one of numerous “hotspots”, as Linde (1980,
cited in Woods 1996, p. 71) terms such contradictions between a person’s espoused
beliefs and his/her actual practice. Martin, for example, endorsed the view that
learners should be more active in the construction of their own knowledge; yet in
practice he did most of the talking and teaching. Thabo, on the other hand, was of
the opinion that teachers had always been practising OBE, and that C2005 was just
“making difficult what we have always done”. In his own classroom, he was the
dispenser of knowledge, and was highly reliant on the pre-packaged learning
programme (SciGuide). This tension between teachers’ beliefs and their classroom
behaviour underscores Roger’s (1999, p. 2) point that the curriculum “represents a
critical interface between beliefs and action” and “a space for contention”. In this
study, the teachers seemed to deal with this “space for contention” by making
decisions and adopting practices that were antithetical to their professed beliefs
about and understandings of the extant curriculum changes.

What made Thabo and Martin’s abdication of their curricular decision-making
authority to the SciGuide texts truly intriguing was that they were equally
unimpressed with its quality and relevance. When they spoke about their
impressions of the SciGuide activities and worksheets, they readily used negative
descriptors such as “superficial”, “unchallenging” and “straightforward”. It seemed
therefore highly illogical that they would adopt the superficial and cognitively
unchallenging curricular decisions made by the authors of the SciGuide Natural
Science texts. There are a number of possible explanations for this observation.
Firstly, the fact that the leadership of both schools played a prominent role in the
acquisition of the LSM, and that all learning areas were using the same series,
meant that teachers were under some pressure to use it extensively. In fact, in
Thabo’s case, parents were surprisingly adamant and demanding that the LSM, for
which they had paid a considerable sum, should be used to its full extent. Secondly,
the fact that the SciGuide series was approved by the GDE as an ‘outcomes-based’ LSM, fed an understanding in their minds that it was well tuned to the demands of new C2005/OBE policies. With such a perception, the SciGuide series would indeed be very appealing, especially considering the broad, unspecified, and content-light nature of the official C2005 documents (Chisholm, 2000). For these teachers the commercially-prepared curriculum texts represented a neat package of what was minimally expected of them. Ben-Peretz (1990), in her insightful book, *Freeing teachers from the tyranny of texts*, concurs with this point by stating that teachers often believe that authors of curriculum textbooks “possess valid knowledge and expertise which is reflected in their choice of the topics, themes and principles...”. Thirdly, their dependence on the LSM for curricular decisions arose largely from practical and functional considerations. These include perceptions that the SciGuide was a ready-made learning programme, that it saved a lot of time, and that it relieved the pressure of the complex curricular change. As I will illustrate later, this sense of the intensification of their work pervaded much of our conversations.

It was clear that by abdicating their decision-making powers to the LSM, and following its script, the teachers in this study believed that they were, to some degree, doing what was expected of them. In this regard, Eisner (1979, p. 120) makes a valid point when he asserts that for teachers “it is easier to do what is expected, even if what is expected has little meaning or personal relevance”. Schraw and Olafson (2002) extend Eisner’s observation to conclude that through this quiet conformity to another authority, “teachers have given themselves over to passivity”.

Although Thabo and Martin’s decision-making and practice were largely framed by the SciGuide texts, there were a number of other forces that, to various degrees, also had a powerful effect on the choices and decisions they made. As I illustrate in the next section, some of these secondary frame factors put more pressure on them to draw extensively on the LSM, while others encouraged them to make the occasional deviation from the SciGuide texts.

**Directives from the local education department**

The frame factor that had the second most profound impact on both respondents’ decision-making and practice was undoubtedly the departmental directives, particularly regarding continuous assessment (CASS) issued by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). This was understandable since all teachers in Gauteng Province were subject to the same portfolio requirements, and had to have a pre-specified range of assessment activities that were to be moderated externally at the end of the year. While the learners’ portfolios eventually accounted for 75% of their final promotion mark, 25% was derived from the Common Task Assessment (CTA), a kind of external question paper common to all Grade 9 learners in Gauteng. Although both respondents maintained that the CTA was quite easy and straightforward, it did seem to frame their classroom practices in terms of
extra learner exercises or longer teacher talks, particularly on those aspects that were in the previous year’s CTA.

Subject matter competence

Another similarity in decision-making frames was detected in their subject matter competence. Coincidentally, both Thabo and Martin did not have specialised teacher training or teaching experience in the Life and Living (Biology) component. They articulated greater confidence in the Physics and Chemistry components of the integrated Natural Science learning programme.

In class they reacted identically by following the SciGuide texts verbatim, but in a superficial way, limiting learner discussion or queries and rushing through the Life and Living worksheets. This is one of the main dilemmas of the integrated learning area approach of C2005 – it was clear from this study that there is the real possibility that teachers’ attempts to enrich or deviate from their chosen LSM texts would be limited to those strands in which they feel competent and experienced, while those Science strands in which they were not competent would be severely neglected. Rowe (1985, cited in Tobin et al., 1990, p. 83) concurs with my observations when he reports that in selected American schools, “lower levels of engagement occurred when teachers taught outside their specialist disciplines in integrated science… non-practical, informational approaches dominated when teachers moved out of their specialised areas…” Similarly, the teachers in this study gravitated towards pre-packaged curriculum texts when confronted with scientific strands or topics that challenged their pedagogical content knowledge.

Classroom routines

Classroom routines include “experienced structures” (Woods, 1996, p. 45) developed in the traditional pedagogical contexts, such as the extensive use of the chalkboard, but also those which the teachers acquired during the short period of C2005 implementation. This latter point was well manifested in the way both respondents had fallen into the lesson routine of an introductory teaching period, followed by learners completing SciGuide worksheets, and then a time for ‘checking’ the answers to the worksheets. Furthermore, their approach to practical or experimental work, where both of them relied largely on teacher demonstrations with minimal involvement from learners, also demonstrated their preference for calling on tried and tested routines. In this regard, Martin had the peculiar routine of doing his teacher demonstrations step-by-step, linking each step with the relevant SciGuide worksheet question. He would then allow learners to fill in the appropriate answer, as observed in the demonstration, before going to the next step. Several conversations with Martin and Thabo suggested that a major benefit of falling back into routines is that it minimised conscious decision-making and wide-ranging mental deliberation both in planning (pre-and post-lesson decision-making) and interactive or ‘in-flight’ decision-making. For these teachers, who
operate in contexts that they perceive to be marked by a severe intensification of the workload, the benefit of relying on routines seems to be worth pursuing.

The Grade 10 Physical Science curriculum

The decision-making of both respondents was to a certain degree also framed by the Grade 10 science curriculum and the learners’ performance. Thabo, for example, responded by infusing some of the key Grade 10 Physical Science concepts into the various Chemistry and Physics lessons, and also by starting with the Grade 10 syllabus towards the end of the fourth term, after they had completed the CTA directives. His rationale behind this practice was that Grade 10 teachers were complaining that their learners, who were the first cohort that followed the outcomes-based C2005, were struggling tremendously. At one point he noted that both he and his colleagues were convinced that these learners were struggling with the much more demanding Grade 10 NATED 550 syllabus, because of the “superficial” and “simple” Grade 9 SciGuide texts.

Martin also taught Grade 10 Physical Science, and was therefore familiar with what his Grade 9 learners were going to do and were expected to know the following year. He was naturally also familiar with the performance and shortcomings of the Grade 10 learners in Physical Science, and somehow tried to prepare his Grade 9 learners more solidly. These insights occasionally influenced his decisions on content selection, scope, and depth, as well as on how to extend classroom exercises beyond the SciGuide worksheets. It was clear that Martin’s concern with the Grade 10 syllabus and laying a more solid foundation with his Grade 9 learners was limited to those sections in which he felt comfortable and experienced, namely Physics (Energy and Change) and Chemistry (Matter and Materials). It was only in these dimensions that he felt competent enough to go beyond the SciGuide worksheets occasionally. The central theme underlying Martin’s occasional infusion of concepts scheduled for Grade 10 Physical Science was his concern about the lack of content in the Grade 9 SciGuide book on which he based his instructional decisions, as well as the misconception that OBE implied less content.

Parents

The most salient differences between Thabo and Martin lay in the impact of parents on their curricular decision-making. On the one hand, Thabo explained how parents were generally a major force at his school, and that they were generally very involved in, and conversant with, the academic performance and progress of their children. He was vehement in partly attributing his mechanical following of the SciGuide LSM to the pressure and expectations of parents for him to use it extensively. On the other hand, parental involvement and pressure did not once surface as a decision-making frame factor in Martin’s negotiation of the new curriculum. In fact, Martin repeatedly expressed disappointment with the general apathy and disconnection of the parents at his school, and that this was most
NEWTON STOFFELS

noticeable in their consistently poor attendance at parents’ evenings. In my attempts to link this finding with the literature it became clear that there is silence on the powerful, though variegated, impact of parents on the curriculum decision-making of teachers. Schmidt et al (1987) report that in their study, less than 20 percent of teachers mentioned parents as influencing their content decision-making.

Available resources

Given the widely different contexts in which the two respondents worked, it is understandable that they had different experiences and ‘stories’ of the impact of resources on their decision-making. Thabo had access to “large, well equipped, and well-stocked” laboratories, and as he noted in our very first interview, he was at a school where “you did not have to crack your head to improvise, because everything was there”. Lack of resources therefore did not feature in his explanations for his curricular decisions. Yet, despite the availability of adequate scientific chemicals and equipment, Thabo still decided to approach practical work in the traditional demonstration way. Also striking was that he limited his utilization of teaching media to the chalkboard, even though overhead projectors, a well-stocked library, televisions and video-recorders were easily available at the school. It was clear though that his decision to privilege decision-making frames such as the SciGuide books and his teacher-centred routines meant that the availability of resources made no real difference to his largely traditional pedagogical style. His degree of dependence on the “outcomes-based” texts was on a par with that of Martin, who taught at a “moderately-resourced”, previously disadvantaged school. As I noted earlier, this designation of “moderately resourced”, given by the GDE, is wholly misleading and inaccurate. My own observations confirmed Martin’s complaints that the school was in fact severely under-resourced, for much of the chemicals and equipment was either non-functional or outdated. What added to Martin’s resource problems was the fact that the senior Science teachers were reluctant to provide him with certain laboratory equipment for fear that the Grade 9 learners would damage it. Essentially the lack of resources reinforced Martin’s decision to follow the SciGuide books more mechanically. In Martin’s mind, it also meant that he could not venture beyond his routines of teacher demonstrations.

Yet another sign of the difference in the impact of resources on their decision-making was seen in the different ways in which Thabo and Martin dealt with the availability of the SciGuide books in their classes. Whereas Martin photocopied worksheets extensively for his learners, or transcribed them on the chalkboard, Thabo did not have to, since his learners all had their own SciGuide books. Thabo theoretically had more time for reflection, planning, or decision-making available. However, in reality, there was a striking similarity in the way that both he and Martin gravitated towards the SciGuide texts. This similarity becomes even more salient when one considers Christie’s (1999, p. 5) prediction cited earlier that “better resourced, historically privileged schools are more likely to manage the
WHY DO TEACHERS DO WHAT THEY DO?

new policies than historically disadvantaged, mainly black schools”. What this means is that the availability of resources does not automatically translate into a more accurate enactment of progressive curriculum policies. Thabo’s positioning as a black teacher at a well-resourced, historically privileged school, and his struggles to manage the deeper, epistemological changes inherent in C2005/OBE, underline the fact that teacher decision-making is very personal, and not necessarily dictated by the level of resources in a school. It would seem that, for Thabo, decision-making frames such as the SciGuide series, his traditional teacher-centred apprenticeship, and routines held more sway in his curricular decision-making than the availability of resources. This is in line with Baxen’s (2001) assertion that, in the implementation of South Africa’s new curriculum policies, greater care needed to be taken with taking teachers’ views and mindsets into account. She links this recommendation to her research evidence that in the Western Cape, both black and white teachers were not making any inroads into the new policies, but for markedly different reasons. Black teachers were hampered by the fact that their teacher training was more in the traditional vein, and that contextual factors such as large class sizes, lack of resources, and lack of understanding militated against successful implementation. On the other hand, white teachers at the historically advantaged schools though trained in more progressive pedagogies did not change their practices because they were largely of the view that they had in fact always been practicing OBE. This view was also emphasised by Thabo.

In practice, Thabo’s perception that OBE has always been part of teachers’ instructional approach meant that he did not challenge or seek alternatives to the dominant prevailing pedagogy at his school. Teachers were encouraged, even forced, by both the school leadership and the parents to use the SciGuide LSM extensively, and to have learners complete its “activity-based” worksheets at a steady pace. This, together with ensuring that learners completed the worksheets in groups, seemed to constitute OBE at the school. In other words, Thabo had become socialised into this superficial (Baxen, 2001) interpretation of OBE, hence his dependency on the “outcomes-based” texts and his largely teacher-centred handling of group work, practical work and assessment. Similarly, despite the fact that collaboration between Martin and his colleagues was minimal and superficial, uniformity (of content, worksheets, practical work, etc.) was a prime concern for them. Hoadley (2002, p. 48), in her research on teacher work identities, speaks about this “uniformity in teacher cultures”, and how “teacher repertoires are the result of forms of consciousness, knowledge, sentiments and values that are socially constituted in the school”. In the midst of the collective thinking, both Thabo and Martin realised that there was more to C2005/OBE than the texts they were using. They expressed awareness that they ought to have learners more actively involved in constructing their own knowledge and that they ought to draw on a much wider variety of sources for content and strategies based on the needs of their learners. However, this awareness remained at a rhetorical level. In their minds, they could not concretise these deeper lying “root changes” (Hargreaves, 1994) because of the deep sense of intensification of their work.
The findings on the decision-making frames that shaped Thabo and Martin’s practices are largely consistent with the literature suggesting that multiple decision-making frames impact on teachers’ practices (Woods, 1996; Calderhead, 1987). In Woods’ (1966) study, teachers made decisions based on the curriculum directives, class routines, their perceptions of their students, and their beliefs and assumptions. As described, Thabo and Martin “voiced” their decision-making frames as the various departmental directives, their subject matter competence, and the Science achievement of the Grade 9 as well as Grade 10 learners.

Understandably, the primacy of the SciGuide LSM in Thabo and Martin’s decision-making and practice meant that there was very little consideration for or deep reflection on many of the decision-making frames that Woods’ respondents enumerated. Yes, there was some degree of connection between the limited number of decision-making frames that surfaced in the study, but it certainly does not have the same rich, interwoven texture. The reason for this variation, as I will argue shortly, lies in the fact that Thabo and Martin experience the implementation of the new curriculum as an overwhelming intensification of their work, and in order to cope with this intensification, they limit their decision-making frames and considerations to the bare minimum. It is interesting that at the same time that South African teachers are afforded greater autonomy to make learner-centred pedagogical decisions, there has been this escalation of external and internal pressures that stifle their ability to exercise that autonomy. Smyth (2001) notes that this constitutes a “substantial contradiction” (p. 39) and the “ultimate irony” (p. 89) of teachers’ work in the modern era. He posits that:

Teachers … are supposedly being given more autonomy at … precisely the same time as the parameters within which they are expected to work and against which they will be evaluated are being tightened and made more constraining.

I am cognisant that this chapter’s delineation of the forces impacting on teachers’ decision-making is far from exhaustive. For other teachers a different set of frame factors might affect what they decide to do in their classrooms. I am also aware that for Thabo and Martin the specified factors of influence are not static or fixed, but are subject to change. However, based on my classroom observations, as well as the way the respondents voiced their thinking about the decisions they made, the frame factors identified here are those that were most intensely experienced by the teachers during the research. Clearly, the most intensely experienced decision-making frame factor was the SciGuide texts. It was also apparent that many of the secondary factors, particularly their own tried-and-tested routines and the parents’ expectations, further fuelled their reliance on the LSM. However, after having identified multiple factors that influenced Thabo and Martin’s decision-making, the question that remains, is: Why were they so quick to abdicate their decision-making authority to the “outcomes-based” learning support material? More particularly, how does one explain their passivity in decision-making, as evident in the primacy of the learning support material in their teaching?
EXPLAINING TEACHERS’ PASSIVITY IN DECISION-MAKING

The preceding discussion and analysis of the evidence which emanated from this research resonate well with the ‘intensification’ literature, which essentially purports that all over the world there has been a “bureaucratically driven escalation of pressures, expectations and controls concerning what teachers do and how much they should do within a teaching day…” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 108). Smyth (2001, p. 3) also shows acute awareness of the extent of the problem when he notes that “teachers are currently experiencing ‘difficult times’ as their work is assailed, prevailed upon, reformed and restructured by forces bent upon … intensification” (see also Chapter 11 in this book).

What seems contradictory is the fact that the extant ‘intensification’ literature depicts the problem as one where the government increasingly usurps control of what happens in the classroom and the kind of decisions that teachers can make. Yet, under the banner of C2005 and OBE, South African teachers are afforded unprecedented decision-making authority. Given that the teachers can make appropriate choices on content, classroom activities and so on, but within the broader national framework of the pre-specified critical and specific outcomes, one can argue that they have semi-autonomous decision-making powers. Despite this apparent flexibility in curriculum decision-making, it seems as if the work of teachers currently operating at the intersection of C2005 and the traditional curriculum is characterised by the very same manifestations of intensification that Hargreaves (1992) enumerated. These include heightened expectations (e.g. outcomes-based teaching), increased accountability (e.g. CASS), more and more administrative work (e.g. portfolios), enforced diversification of expertise (e.g. integrated science), and a lack of time for proper lesson preparation (e.g. as a result of an increased workload).

The fact that Thabo and Martin experienced the implementation of C2005 as an immense intensification of their daily work came through very strongly throughout the research period. The most dominant rationale for their classroom practice, particularly in terms of their mechanical and perfunctory use of the LSM, was that they were overworked, overloaded and that they just did not have the time to be more responsive to the C2005 intentions. Clearly then, the respondent teachers’ inordinate reliance on the LSM worksheets constitutes a “lack of pedagogical pluralism” and a “remarkable uniformity in teacher culture,” brought on by “substantial pressures” (Smyth, 2001, p. 49). These “substantial pressures” can also be characterised in terms of the intensified “decision-making landscape” (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995) that the respondents in this study had to navigate. On this complex decision-making landscape, a number of intersecting decision-making frames were vying for their attention, impacting their pedagogical choices and practices to different degrees. These include the SciGuide text, the departmental directives and policy guidelines, their subject matter competence, their colleagues and, in the case of Thabo, the parents. Some of these elements on the landscape, such as the LSM and departmental directives were taken as authoritative and requiring action and response, while others were not. Moreover, some of these frames were conflicting, and created real decision-making dilemmas.
(see Cuban, 1992, p. 6) for the respondents. For example, the new curriculum, to which both teachers professed an allegiance, stipulated an integrated, learner-centred, and outcomes-based approach. However, practical decision-making frames such as their subject matter competence and the need to keep up with the highly prescriptive CASS militated against the classroom implementation of these policies. It is evident that for the most part, Thabo and Martin limited their movement on this complex, dilemma-ridden decision-making landscape by gravitating towards the learner support material. What added to the respondents’ sense of intensification on this decision-making landscape was the limited opportunity for comprehensive training and continuous on-site support (Chisholm, 2000). Both respondents expressed grave disappointment at the superficial, transmission-oriented approach that the few cascade training workshops took, as well as the fact that there had not been any sustained instructional support, particularly with regard to OBE. The debilitating effect of this lack of support, becomes even clearer when one considers the warning by Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 23) that “… large-scale, change-bearing innovations lived or died by the amount and quality of assistance that their users received once the change process was under way”.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that a number of decision-making frames impact on teachers’ classroom practices, but that in an intensified decision-making landscape, support texts play a definitive role in what teachers do. In responding to the question of why teachers do what they do, I provided evidence that it is the inordinate intensification of teachers’ work that accompanied the implementation of C2005 in South Africa that triggered teachers’ dependence on commercially prepared texts. It is alarming that this dependence persisted despite the teachers’ articulated belief that these support texts were “straightforward, superficial, and unchallenging to the learners”.

The pedagogical implications of this intensification of teachers’ work and the resultant perfunctory use of textbooks are considerable. Essentially it means that the desired “teacher agency in curriculum matters” (Paris, 1993, p. 16), implicit in OBE and C2005, will not be realised in the short term. Furthermore, when teachers’ minds are preoccupied with survival, cutting corners, and mere coverage of the texts, effective teaching and learning is severely compromised. What is alarming though, is policy-makers’ technical-rational assumptions that teachers have the capacity and will to change their patterns of decision-making in line with the new policy directives. This was clear in that the very essence of C2005 is greater autonomy and decision-making opportunity for teachers, yet all the official curriculum communications were characterised by a deafening silence on how teachers should adapt their decision-making. What this study shows is that the threat of intensification on teachers’ work, especially during complex curriculum change in developing countries, is very real. What it also demonstrates is that the resultant passivity in decision-making of teachers, coupled with their dependency
WHY DO TEACHERS DO WHAT THEY DO?

on pre-packaged curriculum texts, can only stifle the implementation of progressive educational policies in developing contexts. Finally, what the findings do point to is “a significant empirical agenda” (Apple, 1986) on teacher decision-making within the context of an intensified, variegated curriculum landscape. Here Johnson’s (1990, cited in Weber, 2006, p. 3) characterisation of the context of teaching and school as a workplace for teachers provide a useful tool to gain a deeper understanding of curriculum change in developing contexts. Whereas this study has shed some light on the organisational structure of school as a place of teacher work and decision-making, more work needs to done to understand how teachers as workers respond to the cultural, sociological, and psychological questions that confront them on a daily basis.

REFERENCES


NEWTON STOFFELS


Newton Stoffels
Chief Researcher
National Department of Housing, South Africa