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Negotiating teacher pedagogies within a transforming South African schooling setting

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the dynamics surrounding teacher's work in which a combination of teacher personal and professional identities help shape the way teachers conduct their professions. The paper explores various ways in which teacher's training and the personal choices tend to inform their pedagogical approaches. The spaces in which teachers work are not only complex but they tend influence the teacher- student relationships which ultimately paly a central role in determining learner success. The paper explores some of the issues related to measuring teacher competencies through results. The papers key argument is that to understand the work of teachers a holistic approach to understanding their identities, their professional competencies, approach to work as well as the work context out to be followed as any narrowly construed approach would not result in any meaningful understanding of the complexities surrounding teacher pedagogies especially in a transforming setting. The paper is based on review of literature and it adopted a constructivist approach in its interpretation of arguments.

Keywords: Globalisation, educational change, transformation, resilient, diversity.

Introduction

This paper focuses on how teacher identities tend to influence their work in terms of their personal, professional and situational characteristics in relation to individual agency. It further analyses the ecological context where their work is undertaken. In the South African context, teacher workspace is dynamic and in most instances teachers have to negotiate through This paper's key arguments are founded on the ideas from studies on teachers' work that cover

four broad themes. The first focuses mainly on the nature of teachers' work (Harrison & Killion, 2007; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Cervone & Cushman, 2012) while the second investigates the complexity of such work (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Nichols & Parsons, 2011). The third broad theme is the pedagogical obligations of teaching (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Penrice, 2011; Cervone & Cushman, 2012; Lepida & Veniopoulou, 2017) and the fourth combines the aforementioned themes, explores teachers' work in contexts of adversity (Harrison & Killion 2007; Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw, 2008; Cervone & Cushman, 2012; Durlak et al., 2011; Hunter, 2012).

This section reviews the international literature on teachers' work. It describes the context of teachers' work in different countries and notes that the literature focuses on teachers' work as well as their students whose results are used to measure the effectiveness of such work. While students obviously play a significant role in a teacher's life, insufficient attention has been paid to the diverse responsibilities that are added to teachers' work over and above teaching. As the agents of the state that implement the curriculum, teachers take on many responsibilities.

The review revealed differences in the level of effort and sacrifice among teachers in coping with students with different pedagogical obligations. Cultural diversity among students and a multifaceted curriculum add to their responsibilities.

Teachers are also required to plan, implement, observe and reflect as well as support education transformation. While their professional development emphasises the special competences and skills required, the socio-economic context in which they operate, and its incongruities have been neglected.

The literature review also highlighted the differentiation and intensification of teachers' work across countries, which puts pressure on teachers. Contexts of adversity require teachers to become resilient. Finally, it was noted that teachers are required to impart knowledge by ensuring curriculum delivery, while also refashioning their approach to work to suit their students and the school. The literature review highlighted that teachers spend more hours working than other professions as they put in many hours of unpaid overtime at home.

In terms of the structure of teachers' work, the literature notes that this includes, but is not limited to teachers as "technicians", teachers responding to context-specific pedagogical obligations and teachers having to cope with complexities and challenges beyond academic

concerns. As technicians, teachers are called upon to respond to problems that emerge while executing their duties. Their training and knowledge do not always prepare them for the complex and challenging pedagogical obligations imposed by working in adverse contexts. Furthermore, the cultural and structural composition of each school is different in line with the type of community; students; infrastructure and support structure; and operational features. This results in considerable variations across geographical settings, and social and cultural capital. Teachers' work is thus complex and multifaceted, requiring individual agency while complying with statutory regulations.

The following section explores teachers' work drawing on an array of theoretical and empirical perspectives. Besides highlighting the intricacy of teachers' work, variations in the context are revealed.

An overview on teachers' work in diverse contexts

Teachers' work is regarded as a sociological act. Hence, a key focus of this study is to explain social action that generates structure-agency outcomes and how this is achieved in the context of adversity. Of particular interest is how teachers shape their responses to contextual circumstances and how they manage structural constraints at their particular school.

Numerous studies have been conducted on teachers' work in the international context (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Day, 2000, 2012; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Harrison & Killion, 2007; Mpokosa & Ndaruhutse, 2008; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Berry, 2009; Cervone & Cushman, 2012). Day (2000) observes that traditional definitions of teaching, including enactment of the curriculum, mutual respect, mutual trust, autonomy and life-long job security are now contested. According to Gur (2014), teachers require appropriate skills because they are responsible and accountable for education-related decisions in the classroom and beyond. Harrison and Killion (2007) note that the many roles performed by teachers include those of resource provider, curriculum specialist, learning facilitator, mentor, data coach and catalyst for change.

As facilitators and coaches, teachers take their students' circumstances into account and intervene and assist in cases of adversity. Such students are motivated to work hard and produce better results. From a critical sociological perspective, Day (2012, p. 7) describes teachers as "victims of policy-driven imperatives as bureaucratic surveillance and new pervasive forms of contractual accountability…". However, Day (2012) adds that teaching is undertaken by "teachers who remain skillful, knowledgeable, committed and resilient" (p. 7).

Richardson and Watt (2006) focused on why people choose and remain in teaching as a career. According to Day et al. (2006) those that choose to teach have "an enduring belief that they can make a difference to the learning lives and achievements of students" (p. 10). They add that teachers' agency involves cognitive and affective endeavours to make a difference in students' lives by enacting the curriculum laid down by the education authorities. Newman and O'Brien (2013, p. 127) support this view and highlight that people also practice "impression management" where they seek to control and manipulate information about them in order to influence the impression that society forms of them.

A sociological contradiction occurs in teachers' world of work in that they live in a society that reveres personal accomplishment but derides individualism. Sun and Leithwood (2015) identify four types of teachers whom they refer to as "school leaders travelling along four paths" (p. 567) and note that conditions in the school and classroom have a direct bearing on agency.

The rational path refers to teachers' instructional practices, while the emotional path describes the degree of trust teachers have in education stakeholders. The collaborative nature of teachers' work fits into the organisational path and finally, parents' hopes for their children are referred to as the family path. Teachers are also expected to fulfil the expectations of impersonal, bureaucratic institutions and adhere to regulatory pedagogical obligations (Dieltiens & Meny-Gilbert, 2012). Shulman's (1987) description of teachers as "technicians" is relevant in situations where they react to the pedagogical obligations of others. However, as noted in chapter one, classroom dynamics might not fit with the perceptions of those that are not intimately involved with the school.

As an Organisation, a school is more than simply a structure; rules, policies, goals, job descriptions and standard operating procedures describe how teachers are expected to work. Each school, and each division within it, develops its own norms, values and vocabulary.

This is generally described as the organisational culture. While the organisational culture is persistent and embedded, teachers find ways to exert some control over their lives within the boundaries of the school (Ghaemi & Yazdanpanah, 2014).

Besides the regulatory work and self-efficacy shown by teachers, Day (2012) bases his perspective on the work of Sachs (2003) who conceptualised teachers as "activist professionals" (p. 7). This is due to the fact that, first, they are expected to make a difference in the lives of their students, and second, while they confront "bumpy moments" (Day, 2012, p. 8) along the way, they uphold their obligation to teach to their best ability.

Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008, p. 6) identify three basic requirements for a functional education system, namely, sufficient staff, a workforce comprised of competent and dedicated professionals, and networking and collaboration between teacher unions and the government. Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009) describe teachers' work as akin to a masterpiece, which mediates the recurring aggregates of duties, laws and responsibilities. They emphasise that teachers' daily work reflects "complexities, paradoxes and tensions" (p. 1). Such challenges are exacerbated by the "paradox of decentralised systems (that is local decision-making)" (Day, 2012, p. 9).

Biographical background and teachers' work

Day et al. (2006) explored variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness. Teachers come from different backgrounds and their personal history is blended with their professional roles. They have diverse cultural beliefs, values and priorities and their reasons for entering the profession differ. How each teacher adjusts to teaching is dependent on their ability to adjust and acclimatise to policies and rules.

Teachers also train or qualify at different institutions and the manner in which they impart their knowledge will vary. The combination of different personalities and efficacy results in multiple dynamics that each school has to deal with (Branson & Zuze, 2012).

While the choice of career is a major concern for any workforce, it plays a vital role in teaching because teachers constitute a "systemic agency" (Ebersohn & Ferreira, 2012, p. 32) that is entrusted with preparing and transforming students for the world of work.

Teachers' personalities influence how they deal with work not covered in the descriptors that regulate the profession as well as how they respond to particular types of students. The term "intrinsic career-value" implies that teachers have a natural passion for teaching. According to Balyer and Ozcan (2014), teachers choose their career based on personal rather than economic and social factors. Some teachers see their role as uplifting children and influencing the younger generation (Kelly, 2012; Lawver & Torres, 2011). Balyer and Ozcan (2014) also found that, teachers' perceptions of their career is based on the respect the profession commands, money and social benefits.

Kelchtermans (2005) explains that teachers have to adjust to the context owing to differences in their cultural background or socio-economic circumstances and they may feel vulnerable in the school context. Teachers' sense of self-identity has not been extensively explored in the literature. When novice teachers enter an appointed school for the first time, the boundaries between themselves and their role as teachers may be blurred. They may reconfigure or re-pattern their work or continue to use methods that they learnt during their training.

Leana (2011) notes that teachers possess human and social capital that they draw on in their work at school. She measured the three aspects that comprise teachers' work or professional capital, namely, human capital (individual talent); social capital (the collaborative power of the teachers at a school) and decisional capital (the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgements about their work that is cultivated over many years).

Professional capital assists teachers to deal with learners from a context of adversity to achieve their primary function, which is to teach. In contrast, Elmabruk (2008) points out that teachers come from a variety of backgrounds. Cochran-Smith (2008) states that several interpretive frameworks are useful in this regard, including understanding teachers as potential proxies for social change and that all teachers have manifold identities and life histories structured by race, class, culture and other aspects of systems of privilege and oppression.

Each teacher has a different biography. In executing their work, they are expected to be 'objective'. Alexander (2011, p. 11) observes that "many white educators have low expectations of their non-white learners, simply because of their belief that 'Black students have less innate potential than their white counterparts'". One of the key findings of Day et al.'s (2006, xiii) study was "extreme wavering whereby teachers' lifestyle has an impact on

their work. This could include domesticated challenges from family (personal), discipline problems with learners (contextual) and regulatory challenges in terms of professional pedagogical obligations".

In the South African context, some teachers were part of oppressed groups in the past, while others were previously advantaged. Some teach at mission schools, while others are based in in public, township and rural schools, or elite institutions. These different schools have different levels of facilities and infrastructure.

Ebersöhn (2015) observes that, "different contexts require a cognizance of pluriversality and geopolitical variance as a result of unequal development" (p. 1). The life-world theory of communities is an appropriate framework to understand the situation in poor rural schools. People form a bond with a particular space over and above its geographical positioning and cultural identity. In some places, there is innate connectivity among individuals. Ebersöhn (2015) speaks of "chronic and cumulative adversities" (p. 4) in South African schools which create challenges for teachers. The significant disparities among schools in South Africa account for the different dynamics of teachers' work (Gardiner, 2007).

In rural communities, students are expected by their families to perform chores before and after school (Msila, and Netshitangani, 2015). They may go to bed and come to school on an empty stomach, which means that they are unable to focus on the lesson. They do not complete their homework or study at home, resulting in poor examination results. Teachers have very little or no communication with the majority of their parents. There are also instances where parents are uneducated and unable to supervise their children's homework. Despite this, some parents draw negative comparisons between their child's school and the smooth running urban schools (Gardiner, 2007).

Children that perform poorly at school are at risk of dropping out of school, and are exposed to social ills like substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, stealing and prostitution.

Complexity of teachers' work

Teachers' work is shaped by "context-specific interactive activity" (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009, p. 3). They are required to executive tasks on time and fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

Teachers are highly likely to bring about change based on their experiences and the knowledge they acquire in the context of their practice (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009, p. 4). The manner in which they adapt to their environment provides an understanding of how contexts influence their work. This study draws on the research participants' actual experiences to shed light on the distinctiveness of the pedagogical obligations placed on teachers when dealing with students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The multifaceted elements that influence information, feedback and the modification of teachers' work highlight the complexity of teaching. Such work is too complex to be measured by a single metric. Scholars like Ridley et al. (2008) and Leithwood and Mcadie (2010) thus call for a range of tools and metrics to measure what teachers are accountable for at their place of work. Any examination of teaching also needs to consider the roles of policymakers, administrators, parents, students and the community at large (Leithwood & Mcadie, 2010, p. 42). Dieltiens and Meny-Gilbert (2012) add that the subjective experience of poverty in a context of poor material, financial and living conditions also impacts on teachers' work.

Florian's (2012) research on Scottish rural schools notes that poor socio-economic conditions are a global phenomenon that impacts on teachers' work. Nichols and Parsons (2011) examined how teachers deal with setbacks and challenges, as well as the manner in which they harness institutional power in such adverse circumstances. There can be no doubt, however, that poor working conditions undermine teachers' work.

Traditional models of teaching assume that teachers that are able to effectively harness their students' academic aptitude and motivate them to perform better (Cervone & Cushman, 2012, p. 2). However, they are also required to assist their students to cope with social, emotional and cultural issues. This is particularly true of teachers that operate in a context of adversity.

The New Work of Teaching's (TNWoT, 2012 p. 12) case study on the work-life of teachers in Calgary, Canada, notes that when teachers' work increases in terms of volume and/or complexity, tasks and expectations are intensified. Honig (2006) and Tek (2014) described how people, policies and places interact to impact on the implementation of educational policy. This is illustrated in the figure below.

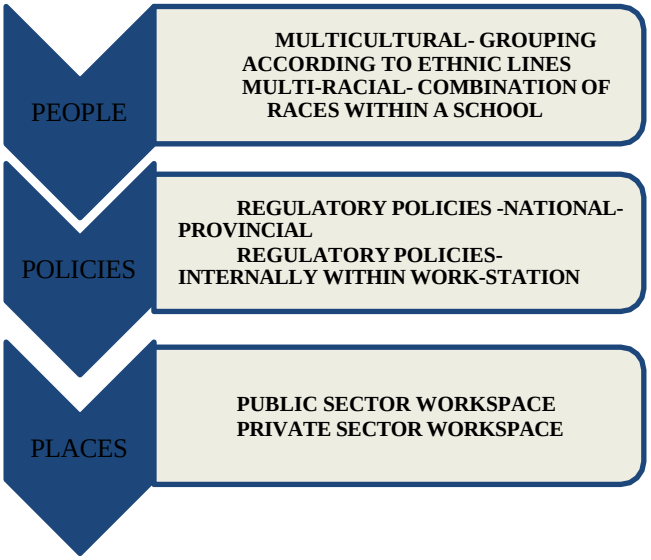

Figure 5 : Dimensions of education policy implementation

Source: Adapted from Tek (2014, p. 2)

White and Kline (2012) focus on teachers' work in the context of diverse, multicultural and multi-racial cultures in a rural community. The current study focused on teachers who may or may not be prepared for a diverse context. As noted in chapter one, despite the adoption of various educational reforms aimed at redressing inequality, gaps persists among schools in the democratic South Africa. Students whose parents can afford to do so have migrated to private and previously advantaged schools that are well resourced, while the majority continues to attend under-resourced schools.

Moreover, Devcota (2005, p. 13) maintained that primary school teachers working for the state seem to care little about the effect of their performance on student achievement, as "whether they teach or not, they are paid" (Devcota, 2005, p. 13). Private school teachers receive higher salaries and undergo performance appraisal, which motivate them to achieve higher standards.

The gaps between different kinds of schools are thus exacerbated. Furthermore, White and Kline note that highly qualified teachers are reluctant to teach in rural areas (2012, p. 36). Poor internal management, teacher absenteeism, inefficient use of time in class, and ineffective teaching methods add to the challenges confronting many South African schools. While these are not peculiar to this country and are indeed, experienced in developed countries such as the United States and Australia, such conditions negatively affect teachers' work. It is for this reason that White and Kline (2012, p. 36.) call for a "re-conceptualisation of teacher education curriculum and a more integrated approach between coursework and the rural professional experience (practicum)".

Negotiating teacher pedagogies through professionalism

Teacher pedagogies cannot be fully understood without closely engaging with what teachers do in pursuit of the good within their profession. According to Lepida and Veniopoulou (2017, p. 19), teacher professional development focuses on technical, reflective and critical skills that comprise the basic teaching competencies. The state requires teachers to focus on implementing the curriculum and emphasises the application of scientific knowledge and critical thinking. Teachers are expected to set fair and achievable benchmarks for students. This requires "just in time" feedback by the teacher-coach, who offers on-going encouragement as students develop and test new skills and knowledge in practice (Cervone & Cushman, 2012, p. 30).

Cornelius-White (2007, p. 113) applied a constructivist approach and found that both the classical model (teacher non-directivity, empath and warmth, and encouraging thinking and learning) and contemporary models are transformative. The study revealed a correlation between positive teacher-student relationships and positive student outcomes. This means that teacher-student relationships have a positive impact on students' development and growth. According to Harrison and Killion (2007), teacher are leaders who assume a wide range of roles to support the school and student success. This can occur in formal and informal settings that aim to build, capacitate and improve the school.

This implies that, as noted previously, teachers' work cannot be measured using a single metric because different levels and aspects of teachers' enthusiasm and commitment combine to reveal the level of their professional ability. Cochran-Smith (2008) noted that, in the era of managerialism, teachers' work is assessed by means of students' results in standardised tests and is rewarded by performance-based salary incentives. While it might make sense to measure service delivery from a regulatory position, this ignores the effort required to support students that are distracted from studying due to their poor socio-economic circumstances.

Harmon, Gordanier, Henry and George (2007) are also of the view that high quality teachers will produce excellent results. These studies imply that teaching is merely about imparting pedagogy and exclude the contextual challenges and setbacks that confront teachers in terms of institutional capacity as well as students that hail from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

According to Jeffries (2017), it is expected that, "teachers will continue with education and training". At same time, there is a "lack of new and diverse teaching and professional development opportunities available for transformative education which has a serious impact on teachers' work" (p. 12). Given that teachers are called on to fulfil their academic duties as well as address contextual issues, Jeffries (2017) states that self-care is important to avoid burnout.

Teachers that are conscious of the need to adopt a positive approach to their work and engage in self-care are more likely to fulfil the requirements of the core curriculum. All teaching staff are expected to maintain records that demonstrate compliance with regulations and legislation. Their work is intensive and includes planning, implementation, observation and reflection. However, teachers' professional development focuses on the required competences and skills, with little reflection on the socio-economic contexts in which they operate (Lepida & Veniopoulou, 2017, p. 23).

Teachers also confront increasing external pressure at circuit and provincial levels. Bascia and Osmond (2013) explored the relationship between teacher unions and government and highlighted the cultural, political and structural factors which contribute to the intensification of teachers' work. Global trends demand that they engage in on-going professional development as well as cope with the pedagogical obligations that educational transformation impose.

Leithwood and Beatty (2008) and Penrice (2011) identified six emotional triggers that influence teachers' work, namely, job satisfaction, stress levels, burnout, organisational commitment, commitment to change and a sense of individual/collective efficacy. Penrice describes the "in school intensification experience" (p. 104) and notes that, managerial structures, diverse cultures, individual relationships at school, self-imposed expectations and an increasing workload weigh heavily on teachers.

Burchielli et al. (2005) describe work intensification as "employees working more than they have before" (p. 95). There are two dimensions to this experience. The first is doing more or taking on additional roles, more tasks and bigger workloads (Burchielli et al. 2005, p. 96). The second dimension involves coping with a reduced workforce, either due to downsizing (layoffs), staff attrition (where staff that leave are not replaced) or not hiring new staff.

The socio-spatial structure of classrooms increases pedagogical obligations on teachers, associated with variations in the number of learners and school infrastructure. While some schools enjoy state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities, many are under-resourced. This results in teachers functioning as isolated individual practitioners. The sequential structure of disconnected lessons interspersed by tests (Schwarz & de Groot, 2011, p. 261) and ensuring compliance with the regulations increases their workload. Penrice (2011) concludes that changes in "teachers' daily work have resulted from increasing control being exerted over teachers through curriculum, pedagogical, assessment, and school management" (Penrice, 2011, p. 104).

Intensification can be defined as an increase in teachers' workload, often "accomplished without sufficient resources or time" (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008, p. 47). Penrice (2011, p. 104) notes that it involves an increased number of tasks, including administrative work, accountability challenges within the classroom and the magnitude of work outside the classroom. Penrice (2011) adopts a Foucaultian perspective to show that rural teachers' work is a discourse of power and resistance. These teachers develop "technologies of the self" (p. 105) because they have to adjust their work owing to the lack of proper parameters.

Eppley's (2009) study examined the historical and political framework of the No Child Left Behind Policy in the United States. While the policy aimed to transform teaching, she notes that teaching in a rural school differs from other contexts. A balance is thus required between

the curriculum and experiences in the classroom (p. 2). In rural township schools, teachers' work is also determined by parents and students' level of involvement. The internal pedagogical obligations of their work and external regulators' expectations impose severe strain on teachers. Social realities such as teaching in a context where students come from a low/no income home add to their burden.

All teachers are expected to come to grips with the social relations in their work environment as well as cope with the pedagogical obligations of the core work and regulatory requirements. The level of flexibility they demonstrate to cope with the multitude of tasks renders them either resilient or inelastic.

Teachers are wedged between high expectations from the communities they serve (Macbeath, 2012, p. 14) and the pedagogical obligations of a multifaceted curriculum. Local, national and global developments impact on teachers' professional independence. When teachers exercise their agency beyond the classroom, with colleagues, parents, other agencies or with policy, they exercise leadership. As noted earlier, some school environments are better than others in fostering the capacity to deal with the challenges of teaching (Manik, Maharaj & Sookrajh, 2006; Day & Gur, 2010). Failure to deal with challenges results in a loss of direction in terms of funding and budgeting, curriculum development, teaching and learning strategies, discipline, staff–pupil relationships and school–community relationships (Day et al., 2011).

Caspersen (2013, p. 10) refers to a "strong normative aspect of professional practice where teachers have to perform many normative, discretionary acts in their work". He emphasises that teachers have to make judgements in many situations, constantly think on their feet and make quick, practical decisions while considering values and dilemmas. Casperson (2013) described decision-making as a basic teaching skill "because classroom work is multidimensional, simultaneous, immediate, unpredictable, public and cumulative" (p. 10).

Karaagaç and Threlfall (2004) explored Turkish teachers' beliefs and practices in the context of their work-setting. The work-setting is crucial to the conflict between a teacher's beliefs and his/her actions (Karaagaç and Threlfall, 2004, p. 141). Engeström's (1993, 1999) activity theory, consisting of a 'triad', is extended to include elements of the social context. The triad comprises three essential elements that are linked to reiterate their interdependence.

The activity theory is insufficient for this study because it deals with the formal elements of work. It focuses on mediation efforts, the division of labour and the rules. Another triad composed of the teacher, the community and teaching tools or techniques intersects this triad. However, the activity theory fails to take into account that some teachers confront an overload of material elements that are not considered by educational policymakers.

In the South African context, it becomes difficult for teachers to seamlessly adopt the imperatives of education departments since they operate in different contexts. Lemmer, Meier and Van Wyk (2006) note that many sacrifices are required to ensure that all citizens receive equal, quality education. The South African government's commitment to democratic participation, dignity, equality and social justice and empowerment of all citizens calls for teacher reskilling and retraining in order to ensure that they are adequately equipped to support social and economic transformation.

While teachers generally lack support from stakeholders, school evaluation causes much discontent. Bangs and Frost (2012, p. 20) state that "school inspections, along with the publication of 'league tables', have been cited as a major cause of unhappiness among teachers". In the United Kingdom (UK), self-evaluations are moderated and evaluated by inspectors. While teachers play a key role in their self-evaluation, they feel excluded from the external evaluation and inspection and are of the view that inspection should be controlled by an outside agency (Bangs & Frost, 2012, p. 21). This notion is opposed in countries like Denmark, Turkey, Egypt and Greece. For example, a participant in Bangs and Frost's (2002) study proposed:"…assessing teachers based on their performance and competence rather than years of experience, and penalising those who do not do the job well" (Workshop Facilitator, Egypt in Bangs & Frost, 2012, p. 21).

Timing and teachers' work

Naylor and White's (2010) quantitative study conducted in 2009 in Vancouver examined the work-life of 563 teachers. It found that they spent an average of 14.4 hours a week preparing, marking and engaging in other administrative tasks, as well as 7.1 hours on additional work. A similar study in Manitoba by Dyck-Hacault and Alarie (2010) found that only 28% of the participants agreed that their workload was manageable. Seventy-three per cent stated that stress and overwork were affecting their performance.

Work intensification resulted because teachers had to do more work in the same amount of time. Dibbon (2004) and Akkari et al. (2009) concluded that teachers spent 52 hours on actual work and 14.9 hours on assessment, reporting, preparation and testing. The three major concerns cited were the excessively complex nature of the curriculum, dealing with learners' diverse needs and having to wait long periods to have special-needs learners assessed and referred. Dibbon (2004) notes that, when teachers have insufficient time to plan, learners requiring remediation and special teaching suffer the most. The study revealed that supervising learners is a waste of the teacher's time and recommended that paraprofessionals be employed to handle non-core teaching activities.

Penrice (2011) examined teachers' work from the angle of pastoral care and noted that rural teachers' plight needs to be taken into account. She suggested that, first, the same professional standards should be applied for teacher assessment. Second, colleagues should offer care and assistance through social cohesion, networking, *Ubuntu* and collaboration, and experienced or 'old hand' teachers should support their colleagues. Mentoring and scaffolding among the teachers at a particular school will raise standards and enhance the profession's reputation.

Gunter et al.'s (2004) study in the UK that was commissioned by Price Waterhouse and Cooper concluded that "teachers work more intensive weeks than other comparable managers and professionals" (p. 3). It found that, on average, teachers work 52 hours per week while other professionals work an average of 44 hours per week. Many employers compensate additional work with overtime pay or a bonus, but this does not apply to state-paid teachers. The study participants commented that the "pace and manner of implementation of change has added significantly to their workload" (p. 7). Similarly, Smaller et al.'s (2006) investigation of Canadian teachers' work and their professional development found that the study participants spent 42 hours per week at school, working directly with learners and undertaking related tasks such as preparation, marking, supervision and administration and an additional 10 hours completing schoolwork at home (p. 25).

South African perspectives on teachers' work

Christie (2008) categorises the additional work besides teaching performed by South African teachers as administrative and organisational. The landscape of teachers' work has been influenced by the introduction of many policies since the ushering in of democracy in 1994,

aimed at pursuing a transformational agenda. After the demise of apartheid, there was an influx of students from township schools to previously privileged, better-resourced schools (Msila, 2009; Msila, and Netshitangani, 2015). However, the majority of students still attend under-resourced township and rural schools.

The nature of teachers' work is both visible and non-visible. According to Alexander (2011), visible and non-visible factors consist of personal characteristics that include background, culture, personality and workstyle as well as race, disability, gender, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation and age that the South African Constitution outlaws as grounds for discrimination. Teachers engage in many professional activities outside their classrooms in order to maintain the school organisation and to ensure that the students' experiences are coherent and productive (Leithwood, 2006, p. 10).

Given that all children below the age of 16 are compelled to attend school, teachers are confronted by the unpredictability of their students' lives. Day (2012) explains that teachers' work in a postmodern society where reforms have been ushered in in diverse ways at varied paces, requiring teachers to embrace change by adopting "political, organisational, economic, social and personal flexibility and responsiveness" (p. 9). Day argues that teachers' working conditions are symptomatic of the "paradox of decentralised systems" (p. 9), where, amid greater societal scrutiny and external accountability, government requirements increase teachers' workload.

Migration to better-resourced schools is not a uniquely South African phenomenon. African American families in the US took similar action to access quality education, impacting on how communities are shaped. Since education is the key to empowering disadvantaged students, this responsibility ultimately falls on teachers and how they construct their roles in enhancing the role of the state. Msila (2009) also notes that in post-apartheid South Africa, parents tend to choose one school over another in the same historically challenged geographic location because they believe that their child will receive greater benefits (p. 83).

Complexity of teachers' work in South Africa

In South Africa and its neighbouring countries, politicians and professional teachers have focused their attention on urban education, leaving many to assume that all is well in schools in rural districts. Very little attention has been devoted to understanding how teachers in those areas go about their daily duties and tasks (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). The dynamics of geographical positioning differ from school to school where space and social life interact and shape each other, compounding teachers' work when learners come from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Schools in both rural and urban areas have their respective set of challenges in terms of social and economic realities. When people move from rural areas to squatter camps amid urban dwellings, there is a drift of students into urban schools. Tregenna and Tsela (2008) note that there are two distinct economies in South Africa and where a person is located determines job prospects and local economic activity.

Spatial inequality creates many complex challenges, not only for teachers' work but for people's lifestyles in general. Growth in human capital has a direct impact on health and education. Provision of RDP housing places the previously disadvantaged, the unemployed and those that depend on state grants in a single community. This community in turn produces a population of students that attend schools in the area; how this affects teachers' work is the focus on this research study.

While ecological space shapes teachers and their teaching space, the reverse is also true. The type of work done today (or what is not done) shapes the current and future society. Regulation of teachers can, therefore, have a positive or a negative impact on society; teachers' work may change a rural township context.

According to Bangs and Frost (2012), the invisible nature of teachers' work refers to work that is undertaken by teachers but is unseen by the regulators of the profession. Books and Ndlalane (2011) cite moral development: creating a love for school and cultivating affection for learning by bringing out learners' humanness as invisible work. Drawing on the work of Bernstein, two types of pedagogical styles of teachers' work have been explored which have been identified as both visible and invisible. In essence a pedagogical palette is craeted in which elements of

visible and invisible (performance and competence) pedagogies are combined to suit existing conditions.

Branson and Zuze (2012) note that inequities in teachers' work persist in the democratic South Africa. While international policies and standards were adopted, no consideration was given to contexts with severe socio-economic challenges or to how teachers in these areas have to adjust their approach to meet regulatory requirements. The impetus for educational transformation in line with global imperatives derives from the conviction that education is the backbone to grow the knowledge economy and prepare workers for a new era (Christie, 2008). The Netherlands provided R213 million over a period of four years to enable the South African Department of Education to empower teachers (Ramdass, 2009).

Teachers working in contexts where students come from low socio-economic backgrounds require support. South Africa took on board the challenges of globalisation and educational policy became peppered with globalisation jargon such as inter-relatedness, innovation, on-going learning, the network community and the borderless world, to name but a few. In keeping abreast with trends, educational reform became synonymous with progress and modernisation in response to the pressure to "globalize or fossilize" (Vongalis-Macrow, 2008, p. 172). However, the 75%–80% of students that come from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Spaull, 2013) do not benefit as much as those from higher levels.

Severe socio-economic challenges are experienced across the African continent. Sehoole (2011) note that financial and social deprivation has negative implications for what happens at schools. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds affect teachers' work at different levels because of the poor learning standards they have been exposed to. Many areas in sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, are "severely inflicted with poverty, therefore they are significantly disadvantaged globally and in terms of their national priorities by the poor performance of the education sector" (Sehoole, 2011, p. 121).

Following global trends in education without addressing poverty creates imbalances that impact negatively on teachers. Teachers play complex social, educative and professional roles but do not have the power to critique or contest policy changes. The policy objectives of global agencies, which determine teachers' work, assume that teachers have limited capacity to interrogate the assumptions underlying globalised reforms; instead, they are reframed as being in compliance with international standards.

Teachers' work and educational change

Silva (2009) and Alexander (2011) note that changes and challenges should be examined in investigating the design and dynamics of schools. While there have been major changes in the state of South Africa's schools, there are also deep continuities with the past. In 2009, Limpopo, the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal were the poorest provinces in the country. Daniel, Southall and Lutchman (2005) note that the former homelands were part of these provinces and that the current state of schools reflects the legacies of apartheid education policies. Thus, the South African education system is embedded in the tensions, stresses and strains of a society where there is a continuous contradiction between its intentions and outcomes. This combination of history, contemporary dynamism and the character of the new education system itself inform the nature of education.

In seeking to transform the education system, the democratic government focused on three fundamental issues. First, justice and human rights were addressed by ensuring uniform spending on each learner. Second, teachers' salaries were standardised and, finally, the democratic government had to ensure that funding was injected into historically disadvantaged schools. However, the communities served by township schools remained unchanged (King-McKenzie, Bantwini & Bogan, 2013).

Changes in education impose additional pressure on teachers. A good example is the on-going curriculum change since 1994. Implementation of such change is resource-intensive and adequate school buildings and resources may be critical for its success. However, the key driver in successful curriculum change is teacher development (Bantwini, 2009, p. 180).

Swanepoel (2009) observes that, given that teachers' work is affected by educational change, school-based management should manage such change (p. 462). In schools with insufficient resources, teachers need to solicit resources; this in turn increases their workload.

All over the world, teachers adjust their teaching from time to time. They develop an "interpretative framework" during their career that is shaped and reshaped through interaction with the social, cultural, structural and political conditions which impact their day-to-day work (Kelchtermans, 2009, p. 260). This framework controls teachers' interpretations and actions in particular situations (context) and is modified as a result of meaningful interactions (sense making) with that context.

This is both a circumstance for and a result of the interaction and represents the preliminary "mental sediment" (Morrow, 2007; Kelchtermans, 2009, p. 260) of teachers' learning and development over time.

Weber (2007) noted that while South African schools were desegregated after 1994, they did not necessarily all become productive. According to Bangs and Frost, distributed leadership "gives teachers the responsibility for leading in particular areas of pedagogy, development of the curriculum and in responding to the social, emotional and well-being needs of pupils, unlocks innovative and untapped potential in teachers" (2012, p. iii).

The type of leadership required of South African teachers is informed by the national curriculum. This curriculum strives to provide subject content that addresses the imbalances of the apartheid era (Bangs and Frost, 2012). While government control applies across the global arena, change in South Africa has led to intensified control.

Negotiating teacher pedagogies through resilience in contexts of adversity

Teacher pedagogies cannot be successfully negotiated without a notable amount of resilience being amassed. Teachers always have to confront diverse dangers that are associated with the teaching profession. Teachers require resilience if they are to find joy in their work and remain in the job (Rizqi, 2017). Resilience refers to a person's ability to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions. It is a necessary condition to sustain commitment (Day et al., 2006, p. xviii). Worldwide, in both urban and rural schools, teachers who display adaptive or proficient functioning despite exposure to high levels of risk or adversity can be considered resilient.

The notion of resilience also features in the fields of psychology and psychiatry. It describes a person's' ability to achieve well-being and thrive regardless of significant adversity. Teachers serves multiple communities and those that work with students from contexts of adversity have to adjust to these challenges.

In a context of diversity and stressful working conditions "teachers have to take their work home which is ironically not recognized as a paid hour" (Rizqi, 2017, p. 24). Some are vulnerable, while others are more tenacious and regard stress as a positive force. The latter build resilience. Endurance can be built using positive emotions such as joy, interest, contentment and love. These characteristics enable teachers in a stressful environment to cope

with the situation in order to enact their main role, which is teaching.

Rizqi (2017) notes that there are 11 official languages in South Africa and English is not the mother tongue of many students. This requires teachers to be equipped with appropriate skills. He adds that teachers' need to develop the capacity to protect themselves from negative and highly pressured environments (Rizqi, 2017). Thus, "to be considered resilient, an individual should be surrounded by stressors that might threaten his/her development" (p. 24).

In cases where students come from low socio-economic backgrounds, such as in the current study, resilience cannot occur without the presence of two essential factors, namely, capacity to adapt, and willingness to be exposed to risk or adversity. A well-functioning teacher who has not faced high levels of adversity, would not be considered resilient (Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw, 2008). "Resilience is not static, it is not a trait, and it is not a construct that can be directly measured. Resilience is a 'superordinate' construct that is indirectly inferred from two component constructs subsumed under its definition: risk exposure and 'good' adaptation" (Kim-Cohen, 2007, p. 272).

Transformation of teachers' work

Teachers have been confronted by many challenges both during and after the apartheid era. Pre-1994, the education system was defined in racial terms. In the democratic period, teachers are called on to embrace globalisation and create a knowledge society. For democracy to flourish, teachers' work means tackling the many apartheid legacies, as well as the educational reforms designed by managers, experts and technocrats.

While schools have opened their doors to teachers and students from all race groups, prior to 1994, spending on white learners was four times that for a black learner (Msila, 2009). The schools attended by the latter thus lack support material, facilities and classrooms. While parity in teachers' salaries resulted in some benefitting monetarily, transformation has had far-reaching implications for teachers' work as they were not part of the process and have not received proper training to bring standards up to par.

According to MacDonald et al. (2010), the task of homogenising teachers' work is a mammoth one as team planning ignores the differences created within classes (climate/abilities etc.) and differences with teacher styles. MacDonald et al. (2010) add that teachers execute their

professional duties according to their own efficacy, for example in the manner in which they handle curriculum needs and interact with the various stakeholders to whom they are accountable.

For some teachers, transformation has not changed the work they did before 1994, but it has added more work by introducing a host of curriculum changes. Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) note that the urgent quest to identify a suitable curriculum to transform South African education after 1994 (p. 271) led to much chopping and changing. The incongruences of the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) curriculum and assessment were noted by education planners, leading to the adoption of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The NCS was subsequently reviewed, and the Revised National Curriculum statement was introduced which led to a new CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) in 2012. Curriculum changes demand "training and retraining of teachers" as well as the "development of new materials and preparing curriculum facilitators" (Onwu & Sehoole, 2011, p. 124), with significant implications for teachers' work.

Concluding remarks

This paper has highlighted some notable similarities in the relationship between teacher experiences and teacher pedagogies between the local and the global spaces. This includes the examination of the nature and complexity of teachers' work at the global and local levels; pedagogical obligations on teachers' work in South Africa; teachers' work and educational change; the intensification of teachers' work; transformation of teachers' work; teachers' work in the context of adversity; teachers' work as "overwork"; and biographical backgrounds and teachers' work.

The review revealed that teachers engage in visible and non-visible work. Socio-economic challenges affect what happens at schools where teachers play complex social, educative and professional roles. However, they are framed as classroom practitioners, with no capacity to critique policy. Teachers' work is not restricted to teaching and learning to teach but can be defined as complex, multifaceted, value-laden enterprises against the global backdrop of the knowledge society.

Teachers' work in South Africa is controlled by strict bureaucratic management, policies and laws. While the status of the teaching profession has declined, teachers engage in many

professional activities in and outside their classrooms. It was also noted that the many changes in educational policy have placed additional burdens on teachers. Moreover, teachers' work in the context of adversity, especially in rural settings, appears to be undervalued. Just as teachers' personalities and background differ, so do the characteristics of the school and the context in which they operate

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