

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

TITLE: OBJECTIVE TEACHER EVALUATION AND DEMOCRACY IN A  
CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA

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STATEMENT:

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ABSTRACT

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In this minithesis I attempt to explain what could be meant by an objective and democratic teacher evaluation system. The central question which I address is whether the current South African teacher evaluation system could lay claim to the kind of objectivity and democracy I develop in my minithesis.

I hold that the current rating scale is problematic, in particular the problematic use of concepts such as "efficiency", "proven achievements", "standards", "potential", "value" and "professionalism" by the Department of National Education - the education body that determines the national education policy.

Then, I show the unacceptability of the concept objectivity in terms of neutrality. This, however, does not necessarily force us into a position of relativism. I claim that we need to look at objectivity in terms of intersubjectivity.

Intersubjectivity links up with community and democracy. I argue that in different communities we can have different forms of democracy. The teacher evaluation community, Gemeinschaft, therefore has a particular form of democracy in which concepts like freedom, accountability, power, authority and participation play an important role.

Given the South African context with its lack of Gemeinschaft due to the apartheid system, I argue that the current rating scale is not objective and democratic and, furthermore, that it would be difficult for any evaluation system at this stage to be objective and democratic in the current South African education set up.

JANUARY 1992

## ABSTRAK

TITEL: OBJEKTIEWE ONDERWYSER-EVALUERING EN DEMOKRASIE BINNE 'N  
VERANDERENDE SUID-AFRIKA (VERTAAL)

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In hierdie minitesis probeer ek verduidelik wat bedoel kan word met 'n objektiewe en demokratiese onderwyser-evalueeringsstelsel. Die sentrale vraag wat ek poog om te beantwoord, is of die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse onderwyser-evalueeringsstelsel aanspraak kan maak op die tipe objektiwiteit en demokrasie wat ek ontwikkel in my minitesis.

Ek beweer dat die huidige evalueringsinstrument problematies voorkom, veral die Departement van Nasionale Opvoeding (die DNO of opvoedkundige liggaam wat die land se opvoedkundige doelstellings bepaal) se problematiese toepassing van begrippe, o.a. bevoegdheid, meetbare bereikinge, standaarde, potensiaal, waarde en professionalisme.

Daaropvolgens, dui ek aan dat die begrip objektiwiteit onaanvaarbaar is in terme van neutraliteit. Dit beteken nie noodwendig dat ons 'n posisie van relativisme moet aanvaar nie. Ek beweer dat ons objektiwiteit moet benader in terme van intersubjektiwiteit.

Intersubjektiwiteit word gekoppel met gemeenskap en demokrasie. Ek beweer dat verskillende vorme van demokrasie voorkom in verskillende gemeenskappe. Die onderwyser-evaluering gemeenskap (Gemeinschaft), stel voor 'n besondere vorm van demokrasie waar begrippe soos vryheid, verantwoordelikheid, mag, gesag en deelname belangrike rolle speel.

Gegee die Suid Afrikaanse konteks met sy tekort aan Gemeinschaft as gevolg van die apartheidstelsel, beweer ek dat die huidige evaluering sinstrument nie objektief en demokraties is nie en, verder, dat dit moeilik sal wees vir enige evalueringstelsel om op hierdie stadium objektief en demokraties te wees in die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse onderwysopset.

JANUARIE 1992

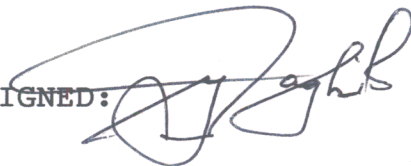
DECLARATION

I declare that OBJECTIVE TEACHER EVALUATION AND DEMOCRACY IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

FULL NAME: YUSEF WAGHID

DATE: JANUARY 1992

SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yusef Waghid', written over the printed word 'SIGNED:'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to Ms. Nelleke Bak, my supervisor, who sacrificed her time in motivating, assisting and guiding me tremendously throughout the writing of my minithesis.

I would also like to express thanks to the research community and especially to Professor Wally Morrow for meaningful suggestions offered towards my minithesis.

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1. THE SOUTH AFRICAN TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

In this chapter I shall give an exposition of the present core rating scale instrument before elaborating on a critique of it. In my critique, I shall examine some of the main criteria and aims of the current rating scale to ascertain whether such an evaluation instrument can measure the "efficiency", "proven achievements", "standards", "potential", "value" and "professionalism" of teachers.

#### 1.1 THE CURRENT RATING SCALE INSTRUMENT

The South African education system is unique in the sense that since 1986, it comprises eighteen separate executive education departments (1). Apart from these eighteen education departments which have their own administrative independence, the Department of National Education (DNE) functions as an umbrella body and determines the national education policy for "formal, informal and non-formal" education (2). For the reason that teacher evaluation forms an integral part of the national education policy determined by the DNE, one can say that the remaining eighteen education departments all use a similar teacher evaluation system. In fact, in 1988 the DNE recommended one rating scale teacher evaluation instrument "for the assessment of achievement recognition of CS

Educators" (3), where CS Educators "are regarded as personnel in schools, education-auxilliary services and technical colleges/institutions" (4). Therefore, teachers serving in any education department are assessed by means of a similar teacher evaluation system. However, the standardization of teacher evaluation does not necessarily mean that each department has to use exactly the same instrument for assessing their teachers. I shall now turn my attention to the following question: What is the difference between the standard South African teacher evaluation system (as determined by the DNE) and an evaluation system used by any of the eighteen education departments, such as the Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Representatives (DEC:R)?

The complete teacher evaluation system which the DNE prescribes consists of 30 criteria. For the DNE, criteria refer to the activities, features or characteristics which a teacher may display during his/her profession (5). With a view towards standardization, the DNE formulated 19 essential criteria; the remaining unformulated 11 criteria are left to the discretion of the various education departments according to their respective needs (6). Thus, the 19 criteria recommended by the DNE constitute the main or core criteria for assessing the teacher. The 11 criteria or part thereof left to the discretion of each of the eighteen separate education departments count as secondary criteria which can

form part of whatever expanded evaluation system each of them intend to devise. From the afore-mentioned, it is evident that an evaluation system is an instrument consisting of 19 core criteria recommended by the DNE, and between 0 and 11 secondary criteria formulated by a particular education department. The DEC:R is currently using the rating scale instrument, namely the VR - PE 67 consisting of the 19 main criteria and an additional 5 secondary criteria, thus, amounting to a total of 24 out of a recommended possible 30 criteria. For the reason that 19 main criteria are used by all the education departments, I find it necessary to expound on the main criteria of the South African teacher evaluation system, instead of addressing the various rating scale instruments - with secondary criteria - used by the eighteen different education departments. Also, the South African teacher evaluation system is itself a rating scale instrument out of which emerged other adapted rating scales used in the eighteen different education departments.

What are the main criteria of the standard teacher evaluation instrument? The main criteria for assessing teachers are set out below (For convenient purposes, changes have been made to the numbering as given in the official text ):

#### A. CURRICULAR EFFICIENCY

I. Planning and preparation of classwork, teaching techniques, aids and schemes of work.

II. Presentation and delivery which involve the observance of skills in the creation of learning situations and the conveyance of knowledge; the ability to create pupil confidence and to retain it; the ability to communicate with pupils/students and the teacher's conduct towards pupils; stimulation and retention of pupil's interest; the taking into account of individual differences; repetition; the use of teaching aids and language.

III. Maintenance of discipline and class control, such as pupils' behaviour and teacher's control of pupils.

IV. Control, evaluation and after-care which include the control of written, oral, practical, classwork and homework; ability to determine whether tuition is effective or not; regularity of testing and the determination of the measure of progress, deterioration or relapse; care of examination papers; diagnosis and determination of results; follow-up; utilisation of test and examination answers; and remedial measures.

V. Organisation and administration which include the drafting of classroom procedures and school time-table; neatness and attractiveness of classroom; keeping and completing official documents, e.g. report cards, registers and progress reports.

VI. Educational objectives realised which include the formative influence of the teacher on his/her pupils; personal development of pupils; pupils' work in terms of amount, quality, originality and knowledge; pupils'

interest in the field of study; and general and individual progress/achievements of pupils with observance of their abilities.

VII. Knowledge and skill in subject matter/syllabuses/circulars/manuals/broad educational policy; brushing up of knowledge by means of private study and attendance at courses; preparedness; and effective use of aids.

VIII. Language proficiency such as the ability of teachers to use official languages as a medium of expression in accordance with pupils' faculty of comprehension and correct pronunciation.

B. EXTRA CURRICULAR EFFICIENCY concerns the teacher's involvement after school hours and in extra curricular programmes.

IX. Maintenance of discipline/group-control which calls for the promotion of the esprit de corps among and pride of pupils, colleagues and community.

X. Extramural involvement in school activities which include sport and cultural activities.

XI. Guidance/coaching offered to cultural, youth and similar movements.

XII. Organisation and administration of functions, exhibitions, matches, competitions, meetings, etc.

C. PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER TRAITS

XIII- XIV. Human relations such as conduct towards pupils, colleagues, community and others; interpersonal relations; and leadership.

XV-XVI. Personal image such as appearance in terms of personal care, attitude, vitality, friendliness, courtesy, sense of humour, sincerity, modulation, assistance to pupils/colleagues/ community, temperance, and exemplariness.

#### D. PROFESSIONALITY

XVII. Display of professional pride and promotion of education's image such as teachers' attitudes towards the profession; standing in the community; enhancement of the profession and dedication to it.

XVIII. Professional conduct towards pupils, colleagues, the authorities and to the outside world such as co-operation, understanding and loyalty; recognition of every pupils' individuality and respect for his/her personal, religious and cultural convictions; manner in which authority is exercised and accepted; respect for the value and customs of the community; and handling of confidential information.

XIX. Involvement in professional activities such as teacher associations and study groups (7).

How is assessment done? Each criterion is assessed on the basis of a seven point scale of which the scale values and

definitions are given below:

<u>Scale value</u>	<u>Definition</u>
1. Extremely poor	Achievements in general do not meet the standard.
2. Poor	Achievements largely do not meet the standard.
3. Poorish	Achievements generally do not fully meet the standard.
4. Quite satisfactory	Measured against the standard of work performance that can reasonably be expected, the achievements are quite satisfactory.
5. Good	Standard of achievement slightly higher than the majority of ... (teachers) ... and which is assessed as quite satisfactory.
6. Very good	Achievements noticeably of a higher quality than merely standard.
7. Exceptional	Achievements of such a quality that improvement on them is hardly possible (8).

What are the aims of the DNE's rating scale instrument? Firstly, the DNE claims that its rating scale is used to rate the "proven" or "measurable" achievements of teachers in an



attempt to increase their "efficiency"(9). Secondly, that it is aimed at identifying the "successes and shortcomings" of teachers with a view towards training, developing, encouraging and guiding their professionalism (10). Finally, that it is used to identify the "potential" in teachers with a view towards promotion (11). This last point is of particular interest, because if the rating scale advantages certain groups of teachers (eg. urban or rural, male or female, white or black) then it will be these teachers who will be filling the top posts in education and controlling it. These issues will be addressed later on.

In summary then, the standard South African rating scale instrument purports to measure the "efficiency", "proven achievements", "successes", "shortcomings" and "potential" of teachers. Moreover, the South African rating scale considerably involves the rating of teachers' personality traits and professional attitudes, i.e. criteria XIII to XIX which constitute almost 40% of the main criteria. Then, the instrument relies on measures of pupil achievement and learning such as their "personal development"; "work in terms of amount, quality, originality and knowledge"; their "interest in the field of study"; and their "progress" and "abilities", i.e. criterion IV. In addition to this, criteria II, III and IX make provision for measuring pupil achievement. Thus, arguably about 10% of the current rating scale relies on measures of pupil learning. Furthermore, approximately 20% of

the main criteria concentrates on non-curricular activities (teacher proficiency outside the classroom). Finally, about 30% of the main criteria is said to measure the curricular "efficiency" of teachers.

## 1.2 A CRITIQUE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RATING SCALE INSTRUMENT

I now turn to the task of raising problem questions about the DNE's claims that its teacher evaluation instrument "measures":

- (1) the "efficiency" of teachers;
- (2) their "proven" achievements and "standards";
- (3) their "potential" and "worth";
- (4) and their "professionalism".

I have identified some of the DNE's aims for assessing teachers in accordance with the various evaluation criteria mentioned earlier. A central purpose of what follows is to examine the link, if any, between the main evaluation criteria and the aims of the standard rating scale instrument.

### 1.2.1 Teacher evaluation and "efficiency"

From the onset I want to claim that the South African rating scale instrument poses a major conceptual problem about the assessment of the "efficiency" of teachers. What does the DNE mean when it claims that its rating scale assesses the "efficiency" of teachers? In response to this question, one

needs to look at the main criteria constituting the evaluation instrument.

I shall analyze the main criteria and look at what kind of "efficient" teacher performance they give us:

Firstly, according to the weighting of the criteria an "efficient" teacher devotes only 30% of his/her teaching practices to curricular efficiency. What this means, is that a teacher is "efficient" if his/her planning, preparation and presentation of lessons, classroom management, and evaluation and control of pupils' school work, are in the rater's view according to the scale values varying between "quite satisfactory" and "exceptional". The remaining 70% of an "efficient" teacher's practice is determined by his/her personality traits and "professionalism" (40%), extra-mural activities (20%) and how his/her pupils perform (10%). If a teacher, in the rater's judgement fails to participate in extra-mural activities or the rater finds that pupils do not do well (whatever this means), then, although a teacher might obtain a high score for curricular efficiency, he/she cannot be regarded as efficient. What "efficiency" means in terms of this rating scale, is that a teacher should pursue his/her practices in the pre-determined manner expounded above. This is precisely the problem. The research done by Coker (et al) shows that teacher evaluation systems which attempt to assess teachers' "characteristics" (constituting 40% of the current

rating scale) and to measure "test scores of pupils" (constituting 10% of the current rating scale), cannot claim to measure efficient "teacher performance" (12). Therefore, the current rating scale cannot be said to measure the "efficiency" of teachers.

On the evaluation of a teacher's personality traits, there is a problem of how a rater can evaluate different personalities. Is a teacher who continuously smiles at his/her pupils efficient? This seems to be naive. What if the teacher is not sincere or that the smiling is part of his/her quiet and reserved personality? Hence, criteria about personality traits are difficult to measure and would therefore seriously threaten the notion of teacher "efficiency" being measured in terms of these. Considering that 40% of the criteria refer to measuring personality traits, it is clear that the current rating scale is problematic.

Secondly, it has been pointed out that 10% of the rating scale instrument sets out to measure pupils' "progress/achievements" in the light of "individual differences" as well as measuring these against the "standard". In fact, the consideration of "individual differences" makes sense since pupils vary according to academic aptitude, socio-economic status and peer group affiliation (13). Nevertheless, if teachers are evaluated on the basis of how well their pupils do, then deception is bound to become part of a teacher's practice. For

example, if one considers that a teacher is evaluated on the basis of his/her pupils' test, practical or examination results, then a teacher can simply raise these scores by allowing his/her pupils to work through the question paper before the test or examination. Coker (et al) assert that "when one person is evaluated on the basis of his/her ability to influence what another does, there is a pressure to deceive or compel compliance which ... would be intolerable in the case of the teacher" (14). Consequently, pupil achievement, if taken as a criterion to evaluate a teacher, "would reduce the quality of teaching" (15); and thus the "efficiency" of a teacher.

Thirdly, one fifth of the current rating scale involves the rating of a teacher's extra curricular efficiency in the form of a teacher's involvement in organizing and managing meetings, sport and cultural activities after school hours. I contend that criteria involving extra curricular efficiency open the door for the halo effect. In the words of Jantjes, "halo refers to the tendency for a judgement about one attribute (criterion) to be influenced by a judgement already made about another attribute (criterion) or by a general impression held of the person judged" (16). One should bear in mind that the rating of a teacher's extra curricular efficiency occurs outside the classroom and after school hours. This makes it practically impossible for the rater to be present say, on the soccer field or to attend a physics

subject meeting at some other school. Therefore, the actual rating of a teacher, while pursuing an extra curricular activity, becomes a difficult task for the rater who, in most cases, is the school principal. For this reason, the rater tends to rely on halo. In doing so, the rater mostly uses the score a teacher obtained for curricular efficiency and assumes that that teacher would have achieved the same score for extramural activities. Moreover, a teacher who scores highly in initial criteria - in most cases criteria about curricular efficiency - achieves a similar score for unrelated criteria - extra mural criteria - because of an overall impression which a rater has of a teacher. For example, a teacher who through the rater's eyes is competent in presenting a lesson in the classroom, is considered equally competent in managing the school's soccer team. This might not necessarily be the case, but because of halo a potentially weak soccer manager can turn out to be the "efficient" expert. Hence, to rely on halo - facilitated by the fact that 20% of the current rating scale involves evaluation outside the classroom - to measure the "efficiency" of teachers, seriously questions the validity of such an evaluation instrument.

In addition, the main criteria about curricular efficiency, constituting 30% of the current rating scale, can also be vulnerable to the halo effect. For example, a teacher receives a specific evaluation for curricular efficiency and at the next evaluation the initial score is used as the basis for the

subsequent one. It follows that a good evaluation follows a previously good one or a poor evaluation subsequently remains poor as a result of the halo effect. In essence, rating scales such as the current evaluation instrument can seriously be questioned as a measure to determine the "efficiency" of teachers for the reason that they can be made subjective to halo, which only reveals "an impression a teacher makes on the rater, a piece of information that has little or no connection with how competent ("efficient") the teacher is" (17).

To summarize, the current rating scale, although claiming to measure the "efficiency" of teachers, cannot justifiably purport to do so primarily because the main criteria concentrate overwhelmingly on aspects such as teacher characteristics, pupil achievement, and observation of teacher performance which fail to protect the evaluation system from problematic issues such as teacher deception, "compliance" and the halo effect, to mention but a few.

#### 1.2.2 Teacher evaluation and the notions of "proven achievements" and "standards"

One of the explicit tasks of the rater is to record a score. This will lead me to my next discussion whether such a score is an indication that a teacher's "performance" has been "proven" (or whether it can or even ought to be) and complies with the "standards" prescribed. So, the question remains what

the DNE means by "proven" teacher "performance". Moreover one also needs to examine what is meant by the "standards" which a teacher has to uphold. Thus, I shall begin by giving an account of the rater's scores which are recorded, since these scores form the basis of the evaluation process. Ultimately, these scores are taken into account when an effective teacher is distinguished from an ineffective teacher, on the basis of what is "proven" and of a particular "standard".

The current rating scale instrument uses scale values which vary between the numbers 1 to 7. These numbers are referred to as scores. A score has a descriptive meaning in the sense that it describes what a teacher is doing. So, if a teacher obtains a score of 5, then it means that whatever was assessed is regarded as "good". However, description is problematic. How does the rater know whether his/her description of a teacher's behaviour was proper? Does a score with a particular definition give a rater a proper description of a teacher's behaviour? To elucidate this problem, I shall expound on the far-reaching effects a score of 5 can have on the evaluation process. Besides telling one that a teacher's doings have been "good", a score of 5 also indicates that a teacher performed "slightly" higher than the required "standard". Noticeably then, a score is simply a number which a rater derived by applying the scale values of the seven-point rating scale instrument. The question is how the rater derived such a score. A score is merely an inference which a rater made about



a teacher's doings and does not contain a "record of what the teacher did and did not do" (18). What are inferences? When a rater observes a teacher's behaviour in relation to the main criteria, he/she makes a judgement concerning what he/she thinks a teacher is doing. If a rater believes what a teacher is doing is "good", then he/she abstracts or infers a score of 5. Is it possible to say that whatever a teacher does is "good" without having some record as to what should count as "good"? In another way, can one say something is "good" without knowing some of the actual practices which inform the term "good"?

The current rating scale defines "good" as being "slightly above standard". But, not only is it difficult to determine what is meant by "good", we must also ask what is meant by "standard" and how different is "slightly above the standard" from the "standard"? To expound on this, I shall refer to criterion III on the rating scale which deals with the teacher's ability to maintain discipline and to exercise classroom control. What is the "standard" of discipline which should prevail in a classroom? Consider pupils who engage in group work in the classroom. These pupils are well-behaved and quiet without talking to each other. Does it mean that a teacher successfully controls the pupils, and thus conforms to the "standard" required? What if the pupils are afraid of being caned if they talk to each other? Does it mean that a teacher exercises a good "standard" of discipline? The

question remains whether noise necessarily implies a kind of lack of discipline? Pupils in a science laboratory might be excited because their experiment worked and consequently increase the noise level in the laboratory. Or, pupils who come from a socio-economic background where they do not communicate "softly" with each other also bring about an increase in the noise level in a classroom. Would a rater consider such classes as noisy and therefore holds it against a teacher for being unable to control his/her pupils? Against what "standard" of discipline did the rater judge a teacher's maintenance of discipline? The more I think of ways to illustrate how difficult it is to measure "standards", the more I realize the shortcomings of scores without some kind of record of what it ought to measure. Thus, scores by themselves fail to give us a description of what a teacher does, whether it be related to curricular and non-curricular activities. Furthermore, for the reason that scores reflect a rater's inferences, and numbers reflect nebulous standards that are never clearly spelt out, it follows that a rater's inferences are based on something nebulous and unclear.

Moreover, how does an evaluator distinguish between a score of 4 and one of 5, for example? Given the fact that promotability from teacher to head of department is indicated by a score of 5, it can make a major difference whether you have that score or whether you fall just below it. It seems very murky and difficult to determine whether a performance in general does

not meet the standard (a score of 1), or whether it largely does not meet the standard (a score of 2) or whether it generally does not fully meet the standard (a score of 3). Logically there seems no difference between these descriptions, so it is unclear how a rater can justify his/her judgement of a teacher's performance.

I shall now say something about scores akin to the notion of "proven" teacher performance. If one considers that the current rating scale is said to contain scores which provide evidence (of a dubious kind) of the "proven" performances of a teacher, then my immediate reaction is to examine what the DNE means by this. I think what could be meant is that these scores are supposed to reveal some proof about the behaviour of a teacher with regard to his/her planning and preparation of classwork, presentation of subject material, maintenance of discipline and class control, evaluation of independent pupil tasks, and his/her managerial skills in completing official documents such as record books, preparation books, etc. For example, regarding criterion V which deals with a teacher's administrative ability, a score of 6 is said to provide proof that a teacher's record book, preparation book, test and memoranda book, practical and memoranda book, etc. are of a very high quality. But, what is the proof, considering the fact that a score only yields a rater's inferences and not an articulated record of what a teacher has done or produced? Say, a teacher, knowing that a rater would evaluate him/her

the following day, works throughout the night to get his/her record book up to date and in order. The next day the rater sees the record book and infers that it conforms to the required "standard". Subsequently, the rater gives the teacher a score of 6 for organization and administration. Is this proof that the teacher has excellent administrative skills? What if somebody else completed his/her record book? What proof is there in the score that this is not the case? This is but one of the many problems a score can generate.

In summary, it is virtually impossible to trace back a score to the actual performances of a teacher, since a score contains no articulated record of such performances. Thus, a score fails to provide a rater with any measurable proof of a teacher's performance. Furthermore, scores merely reflect a teacher's inferences of what he/she believes actually happened. For the reason that inferences can differ from situation to situation, it becomes difficult for a rater to maintain a particular "standard".

Another important factor that needs to be mentioned is the fact that scores, "could be manipulated mathematically and statistically" (19) by a rater. In other words, a score of 5 can easily be changed to a score of 4, depending on what a rater infers as a significant variable, i.e. teacher performance in relation to curricular and non-curricular activities. In essence, scores impose serious limitations on

the current rating scale and the measurement of "proven" and "standard" performances are highly problematic.

### 1.2.3 Teacher evaluation, "potential" and "value"

Rating scales such as the South African teacher evaluation instrument are expected to determine the "potential" of teachers. Implicit in this expectation is the notion that rating scales could also determine the "value" or "worth" of teachers (I regard these two concepts as being the same). So, my next move is to examine

- (i) whether a "worth" can be measured,
- (ii) whether the criteria do in fact measure the "worth" and not something else,
- (iii) and whether one's "worth" ought to be measured.

Firstly, what does it mean to assess the "potential" of teachers? Is "potential" measurable? A dictionary definition of the notion "potential" is as follows: "potential - 1. capable of coming into being or action. 2. capacity for use or development ..." (20). It follows from this that "potential" refers to something that is likely but not necessarily guaranteed to happen, i.e. a possible future occurrence. If one contextualizes this meaning of "potential" in terms of a teacher's behaviour, then it means that the behaviour of a teacher must demonstrate that the teacher has the capacity to develop in a particular way. Hence, "potential" has some kind

of predictive quality. To say a teacher has "potential" would mean that such a teacher shows an ability to become such and such in the foreseeable future. Thus, "potential" in this context means that the behaviour or "performance" of a teacher would take on another form. As a result, a rater using the rating scale instrument infers the "potential" a teacher possesses. But how can one make meaningful judgements (i.e. measure) about something that is still to happen? Not only is it something of which the rater has no direct experience (since it is future orientated), it is also about something which is only likely to happen, but will not necessarily come about. The difficulties of measuring (i.e. giving a score to) a possible future development of which the rater has no direct experience are obvious. Moreover, the inferences which a rater makes do not happen independently from his/her value judgements. Nixon asserts that "widespread agreement within the evaluation community (exists) that evaluators (of teachers) cannot reasonably claim to operate from a value-free position" (21). Consequently, when a rater claims to identify the "potential" a teacher has, he/she does so in the light of his/her own set of values. This is exactly the dilemma, because three different raters would assumingly come up with different understandings of a teacher's "potential". For example, one rater might in his/her view infer a "potential" in a teacher to become a good disciplinarian, whereas another rater might not see it in this way, but would lay great store by the potential of becoming a good administrator.

What would then be the "potential" of a teacher? "Potential" is not something which stands independent. We talk of someone's potential to do something specific or as having a potential in something specific. Therefore, one cannot just measure potential, without linking it to something specific. A particular teacher may demonstrate potential to create conditions conducive to learning whereas he/she may have little capacity for administrative tasks. This immediately leads me to conclude that there is great difficulty in measuring "potential" in the light of different sets of values which influence different raters. So far, much has been said about scores, but I cannot imagine a number indicating the "potential" a teacher might supposedly have. Therefore, the current rating scale has serious inadequacies, especially when the identification of a problematic notion like "potential" is claimed to be amongst its aims.

Secondly, how does one determine the "value" of a teacher? Is it possible to do so with the aid of the current rating scale? In response to these questions, I shall begin by attempting to clarify what is meant by the "value" of a teacher. Consider first the account which Michel Foucault gives of the concept "value". I shall briefly sketch his account and offer illustrative examples of my own pertaining to what I understand as the "value" of a teacher.

Foucault links the concept of "value" with that of "exchange" and posits that "money has value as the representation of the wealth in circulation" (22). For him, "all that satisfies a need has ... value ... and that all ... positive elements that constitute value are based on a certain need present in men" (I consider his use of the masculine as referring to the feminine form as well) (23). Explicit in Foucault's exposition of the concept "value" is an understanding that a logical connection exists between the notion "value" and the "need" thereof. For Foucault, money, like all other forms of wealth produced or generated, has value, i.e. "meaning". However, the need for money and all other forms of wealth which undergo exchange (i.e. the act of giving, receiving, transferring, etc.) are internally linked to people's reasons for having that "need". For this reason, I deduce that people have reasons for having needs. For example, Foucault asserts that people (like employers) have a need for money to remunerate their workers. Hence, a logical connection exists between the need and a reason for that need.

How does this understanding of "value" connect with the "value" a teacher has? My understanding of Foucault's explication of "value" prompts me to say that whatever a teacher does in relation to his/her teaching practices - whether a teacher is busy with instruction in the classroom, or visiting a pupil's parents to discuss the pupil's academic progress at school - implies that a teacher embarks upon a



process of "exchange". The information that is shared between teacher and parent is tantamount to a process of "exchange". Moreover, a teacher's visit to the pupil's home satisfied a particular "need", for example, the "need" of a teacher to consult with the parent, to find ways and means to motivate the pupil to take his/her school work more seriously. The visit to the pupil's parents or any other activity pertaining to the teacher's practices is based on his/her reasons for wanting to satisfy a need; in my view, one can say his/her activities has "meaning" and therefore a sense of "value".

Furthermore, to say someone has "value" implies that that person pursues a particular action, in response to a need. Kovesi posits that the "life and use" of a concept, in this instance the concept "value", is not only shaped by the use of the concept, but "all other activities in the performance" thereof (24), meaning all actions, movements or deeds underlying the concept "value". Therefore, in my view, "value" can also be considered as an "action concept" because in this sense, it is used "to describe behaviour (of a teacher) which is done with a purpose such that one can ask, what is its point, aim or intent, or what was the person trying to do, desiring or meaning" (25). What one asks is: "What is the value of that teacher's actions?" So, in my view, actions, such as a teacher's practices, reflect his/her "value".

But what are these actions? Are they just merely actions which a teacher does willy-nilly, or are they rule bounded? An explication of a teacher's actions related to a notion of rule following is important if one wants to look at the process of assessing the "value" of a teacher. I hold that an action that has value does not mean any kind of "mindless mechanical movement". Actions that have value are actions that are meaningful and are informed by specific reasons and needs. "Some actions are meaningful actions, whilst others are not" (26). For example, a teacher who circulates in the classroom while his/her pupils are busy with independent exercises is not merely walking to give his/her legs some exercise, but he/she does so to monitor the pupils' progress. Although walking up and down in the classroom may have the meaning of stretching one's legs, in this sense, the meaning of circulation depends on what a teacher "believes" (27) he/she is doing, i.e monitoring what the pupils are doing. Consequently, "meaningful actions" on the part of a teacher, are governed by the appropriate intentions or purposes with which such actions have been done. For this reason, "conscious" actions as distinct from "mindless" movement mean practice (28). So, the circulation of a teacher in the classroom is a practice as it involves an action done with an appropriate educational intent or purpose. Therefore, there is a connection between "meaningful action" and practice. So, when the value of a teacher's practice is assessed then the rater must know what the intentions or purposes are that have

shaped the particular meaningful action that is being evaluated.

In addition, a meaningful action does not exist independent from the social rules in terms of which the action occurs (29). For a teacher to lie on his/her back while teaching is contrary to the rules or the conventions of teaching. Conforming to the rules, such as standing while teaching, gives meaning to the act of teaching. Hence, if meaningful actions are linked to both rules and practices, then a link exists between practices and rules. Therefore, in assessing a teacher's value, the rater must know not only the purposes underlying a specific action, but also the rules that govern that action.

To come back to my initial question about the assessment of the "value" of a teacher, I contend that such a process ought to involve the determination of a teacher's rule following practices or "standards" of teaching as well as that teacher's intentions. But, are these measurable in terms of the current rating scale? I certainly do not think so. The rating scale instrument's main criteria form the guiding principle according to which a rater has to assess a teacher. None of the criteria focus on the teacher's intentions nor on how the social rules inform "the standard". Nothing in the criteria addresses how a teacher's practices or how the social rules can change depending on external variables such as authority

structures, school size, school principal, socio-economic class of school population, etc. For this reason, the measurement of a teacher's "value" can become a problematic task, because the important underlying assumptions which mould the assessment (such as intentions, social rules, standards, etc.) are not articulated and they thus remain nebulous, vague and change according to context.

In summary, the current rating scale instrument cannot lay legitimate claim to measuring the "potential" and "value" of teachers for reasons that: Firstly, raters set about their evaluation task with their own set of values, thus inferring and giving emphasis to different aspects of teachers. This value-laden inference influences the evaluation process and in turn affects the notion of "potential". Therefore, what a rater infers to be a teacher's "potential" might differ from rater to rater. Secondly, the current rating scale instrument ignores the intentions of teachers as well as the external influences authority structures, school size, school population, socio-economic class of pupils might have on the practices and hence the value of teachers.

To return to the three questions posed on p 19, I have tried to show that the existing criteria do not in fact measure the value of a teacher. Furthermore, it is clear that it is difficult to determine whether one can measure someone's intentions and the influence of social rules on meaningful

actions. As to the last question on whether a teacher's value ought to be measured, an answer would be difficult to develop since there seems to be no clear indication whether it can in fact be measured. Perhaps what is needed is a different conception of "value" as something which cannot be expressed numerically. However, it is beyond the scope of this minithesis to pursue this line of argument.

#### 1.2.4 Teacher evaluation and the notion of "professionalism"

I now focus my attention to "professionalism", also claimed to be one of the notions which the current rating scale ought to measure. What is meant by "professionalism" and on what grounds does the rating scale lay claim to measuring this notion?

"Professionalism" could be seen as a descriptive term which is about an "altruistic service" an individual (such as a teacher) renders to another. The "professionalism" say acquired by a teacher through teacher training gave him/her a kind of dignified status based on expertise. So, on this basis, a qualified teacher is distinguished from a parent who educates his/her child, but who might not have any teacher training. Thus, a teacher has a kind of "professionalism" which lays claim to respect from others on the basis of certain "standards and criteria of excellence" such a teacher claims to represent. The question is whether the current

rating scale measures this kind of "professionalism" which a teacher is said to represent.

The current rating scale fosters uncertainty and mistrust, in the sense that the rater (mostly the school principal) is only allowed to give the final assessment in terms of a teacher being promotable or non-promotable. The actual scores recorded for the main criteria are seldom revealed, and remain hidden from a teacher. For example, teachers serving the DEC:R, who occupy post level 1 (secondary or primary teacher) and want to gain promotion to post level 2 (head of department) should obtain a score of 108 out of a maximum score of 168. The only information teachers ought to know, it is said, is whether they are promotable (a score between 108 and 131) or not. In fact, teachers are not supposed to know their scores. Thus, a teacher who qualifies for promotion should have obtained a numerical value of 5 according to the seven-point scale values. Where does the uncertainty and mistrust creep in? The school principal is not allowed to show teachers their respective scores. In other words, the VR-PE 67 is only to be seen and used by the principal, circuit inspector and sometimes school secretary who has to type the confidential information. So teachers cannot be sure why they are promotable or not because they may not see the scores they obtained.

Moreover, a teacher makes no contribution as far as the

validation of the evaluation report is concerned. The report remains the property of the respective education department. It is for reasons like these, that the current rating scale receives unfavourable response from its critics, who claim that their integrity is attacked, and that they are dehumanized, meaning that their status as professionals is eroded. Thus, the current rating scale has no respect for a teacher as a professional - who lays claim to respect and dignity. On these grounds, the current rating scale cannot lay claim to be measuring the "professionalism" of teachers, because the notion of "professionalism" loses its impetus when the integrity of teachers is attacked.

In conclusion of this chapter I would like to stress that much can still be said about the problematic issues underlying the current rating scale instrument. I shall attempt to address other problematic issues in further detail in the final chapter and look specifically at the South African context. For now, I have briefly sketched some of the main criteria constituting the current rating scale, and in turn provided a critique thereof. I have pointed out the problematic use of concepts such as "efficiency", "proven achievements", "standards", "potential", "value" and "professionalism" by the advocates of the current rating scale instrument. I shall now turn my attention to the notion of objectivity and whether any form of teacher evaluation can be objective.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. TEACHER EVALUATION AND OBJECTIVITY

In the previous chapter one sees how the current rating scale instrument is being challenged and how it fails to come to terms with problematic, yet necessary concepts, namely "efficiency", "proven achievements", "standards", "potential", "value" and "professionalism", which play an important role in any teacher evaluation system. Inherent in my critique of the current rating scale is an assumption that the current use of these concepts is problematic and vague; I hold that any teacher evaluation system ought to be objective. Now, my potential critic would argue that the current rating scale is objective because it is neutral. But it is this "neutral" kind of objectivity which I find problematic and which needs to be analyzed so that the unacceptability of this view of objectivity for teacher evaluation is highlighted. In this chapter I also want to argue for a need to reconceptualize what we can fruitfully mean by objectivity and to clarify how such a different view of objectivity links up with teacher evaluation.

#### 2.1 OBJECTIVITY IN TERMS OF NEUTRALITY

I begin this section with a statement made by Charles Taylor:

There is nothing to stop us making the greatest attempts



to avoid bias and achieve objectivity . Of course, it is hard, almost impossible, and precisely because our values are also at stake. But it helps, rather than hinders, the cause to be aware of this" (30).

Implicit in this statement is a notion that objectivity is considered by some as a value-free concept, i.e. one without value biases. However, this is not a view Taylor himself holds. Rather, such a view of objectivity finds expression in positivism, which looks at any study from a neutral point of view. But what does this kind of neutrality entail? Positivism makes a distinct separation between what is fact and what is value. Taylor argues that when we pursue our research, we do so with inevitable biases, which "arise, ... from outside factual study; ... (and) spring from deep choices which are independent of the facts" (31). However, objectivity from a positivist point of view, remains logically linked to neutrality, which involves "a dispassionate study of facts as they are, without metaphysical presuppositions, and without value biases" (32).

How does this view of objectivity link up with the current rating scale instrument? I want to claim that it appears as if the proponents of the current rating scale instrument fall into the trap of seeing this teacher evaluation instrument as objective in terms of neutrality. My claim is based on the following reasons:

Firstly, the main criteria constituting the current rating

scale instrument are considered by its proponents as "mandatory prescribed criteria" (33), according to which teachers have to be assessed. By implication, the raters, namely the school principal, inspector and head of education are instructed to carry out assessment using at least the main criteria. Thus, evaluation would be incomplete if a teacher is not assessed on the mandatory criteria, which are assumed to assess the essential practices of teachers. The mandatory criteria are regarded as standard or universal criteria telling the raters on what to assess teachers, without a choice to consider which of the mandatory criteria are relevant for particular teachers or not. In fact, as mentioned in chapter 1, all teachers in South Africa are assessed on the same main criteria. With the result, one can justifiably claim that the main criteria are considered by the DNE as universal or generalized criteria; a notion which finds deep expression in the concept of objectivity in terms of neutrality. I hold that the proponents of the current rating scale assume that the mandatory criteria are unbiased or value-free, ignoring the fact that these main criteria were "founded on choices whose basis remains obscure" (34). In the process, it appears as if the DNE does not confront the issue that the main criteria themselves have been the work of people who brought to the teacher evaluation system their own values. In the words of Taylor, it appears as if they ignore the fact that "the goals and values (underlying the main criteria) still come from somewhere else" (35). In this instance, "somewhere

else" could refer to those educationists who compiled the main criteria for the DNE.

Secondly, the DNE claims that one of the aims of the current rating scale is to measure the efficiency of teachers. How is this to be done? The DNE document explicitly speaks about assessing teacher efficiency in terms of "proven above-average achievements". From this, it follows that teacher efficiency in the DNE's view, is recognizable if and only if achievements of teachers have been proven. Inherent in this claim is an underlying positivist assumption that is neutral and therefore objective. Why? Because positivists say that something only becomes objective and a fact once it is proved. Hence, proven achievements would imply that a factual analysis was done, in contrast to an assessment based on value judgements. However, "proven" itself is not a neutral term, because the rater does the "proving" with his/her own set of norms and values. In essence, "proven" does not necessarily mean neutral. In addition, the notion of "proven" itself poses a problem. How does a rater recognize a "proven achievement" of a teacher? For example, a teacher submits his/her pupil test results to a rater, and the rater finds that the results are "good". What has been "proven"? Does it mean that because a teacher gave a classlist, containing pupil averages to a rater, who by his/her standards finds the results quite satisfactory, that a teacher's achievement has been "proven"? But this still does not answer the question "what has been proven"? Assume a

teacher never gave his/her pupils a test and that the results have been fabricated to impress a rater. Can a claim still be made that the rating scale measures the "proven achievements" of teachers? So, the question remains whether achievements can be proved or measured at all. What I want to claim at this stage, is that achievements cannot be proved or measured in a neutral way. But why ought achievements to be proved or measured? In my view, it appears as if the proponents of the current rating scale instrument certainly believe that the teacher evaluation instrument ought to do so in order to be regarded as being scientific and therefore objective.

Thirdly, the proponents of the current rating scale draw attention to the fact that only the "measurable" practices have to be measured. I hold that this view strongly echoes a positivist notion of objectivity for the reason that in this view neutrality is concerned with "observable facts". Taylor draws on Van Dyke who relates neutrality as follows:

"...(Neutrality) ... relate(s) to only one kind of knowledge. i.e., to knowledge of what is observable (or measurable) ... (and that) concerns what has been, is, or will be ..." (36). This, in my view, is exactly what the DNE wants to portray, namely that their rating scale instrument is neutral and objective and measures "what has been, is, or will be".

In conclusion of this section, I want to highlight why a notion of objectivity in terms of neutrality is unacceptable

as a concept for any teacher evaluation instrument, in particular the current rating scale. Teacher evaluation is a process which embodies a notion that evaluators have to assess teachers. Thus, human beings have to interact with each other, which makes teacher evaluation a human practice. But, human practices incorporate certain values which arise out of particular needs, social rules and historical conditions. For example, historically teacher evaluation grew out of a need to measure teacher skills in terms of scores and other indices in the 1920s and 1930s (37). By the 1950s, evaluation theorists had a different need and reason to broaden the concept of teacher evaluation. It was felt that no longer could the evaluation process be dependent on scores and that "non-metric" evidence should dominate the evaluation process. In other words, different historical conditions prevailed and consequently a different approach to teacher evaluation, namely "observation" had to be introduced. The earlier teacher evaluation procedures had their limitations precisely because they involved human practices. Therefore, for proponents of a positivist view to assume that neutral teacher evaluation procedures can exist without being influenced by the human element is highly problematic. I say this because objectivity in terms of positivism is commonly understood by a notion that the same procedures for observing and measuring phenomena and things in the non-human world can be used in the human realm as well. Now, these proponents of a positivist view of teacher evaluation would argue that scores are neutral indexes. But

then it should be borne in mind that the scores which are recorded are both formulated and interpreted by human beings. This brings me to my next criticism of objective teacher evaluation in terms of neutrality.

Teacher evaluation, being a human practice, implies that evaluators have to make use of "certain standards, rules, principles, or criteria of judgement" (38), according to which teachers are assessed. At this stage I do not wish to go into detail about standards, criteria or principles. I want to limit myself to the notion that evaluators do enter the evaluation arena with their own set of interpretations of concepts. So, although a rater carrying out the evaluation process is bounded by the main criteria, he/she nevertheless does the assessment on the basis of his/her judgements. Consider a rater who assesses the personality traits of a teacher. This teacher, say, has a very stern outlook without blinking an eye while teaching. The rater then assumes that such a teacher is unfriendly and gives such a teacher a score according to what he/she believes to be part of a teacher's personality traits. This is certainly a value judgement. Hence, "the evaluator cannot escape value judgements, ... (which) ... is own in ... the people involved in the ... (evaluation process)" (39). For this reason, to claim that a teacher evaluation system can be objective in terms of neutrality, is unacceptable.

Finally, if a teacher evaluation system ought to be objective in terms of neutrality, then it follows that the criteria constituting such a system are regarded as being universal, meaning that these criteria, like that of the current rating scale have to be applicable to all educational institutions, especially different schools. We see then that a universal teacher evaluation system has to be operative in all the educational institutions, if it is to be objective on the basis of neutrality. But this is exactly the problem with such a teacher evaluation system, particularly for South African teachers. Why? Let us consider the following information about Black teachers, who are generally regarded as the disadvantaged teachers in South Africa on the grounds that the majority of them have not been exposed to the kind of teacher training their White, Coloured and Indian counterparts have been exposed to. There are 263 873 Black teachers in South Africa including the self-governing states out of a total of 423 925 , i.e. 62,24% of the South African teacher personnel (40). If one considers that 45% of all General Science teachers are underqualified, i.e. without post-secondary or tertiary education, and the majority of them are Blacks (41), then one can see the inadequate teacher training these teachers received. Thus, my question is whether these disadvantaged teachers ought to be assessed with a universal (meaning the same) teacher evaluation instrument as their colleagues who have not been disadvantaged. I do not think so for the reason that a teacher evaluation instrument is also

said to measure those skills teachers acquired during their teacher training. Hence, if the majority of these teachers did not receive the appropriate teacher training, such a teacher evaluation instrument measures an advantaged or disadvantaged background without addressing the question as to how the practices can be improved. Moreover, the result of using the current rating scale is that the already disadvantaged teachers will consistently score badly and are thus unlikely to be promoted into senior positions, further entrenching the disadvantage.

Another reason why a "neutral" teacher evaluation instrument is also unacceptable, is that the conditions, needs and wants of teachers differ from place to place and thus from school to school. For example, teachers in rural areas teach under vastly different conditions than teachers in urban areas. Thus to use the same teacher evaluation instrument for the sake of generalization, i.e. neutrality, is not acceptable.

In summary of this section, I want to state that teacher evaluation cannot be objective in a neutral sense. So, if such an approach to teacher evaluation is implausible, then my next move will be to examine whether by rejecting neutrality we are forced into a position in which relativism abounds.

## 2.2 SUBJECTIVITY AND RELATIVISM



If an objective teacher evaluation system in terms of neutrality is untenable, is such a system then necessarily subjective? In this section I want to claim that this need not be the case for the opposite of objective is "not-objective" and not "subjective". So, if a teacher evaluation system is not objective in terms of neutrality does it mean we have to accept subjectivity or relativism? In this section I shall attempt to examine whether a teacher evaluation system must necessarily succumb to relativism. What is relativism? If we do not accept some fixed, universal, neutral standard are we doomed to drown in a chaotic sea of subjectivism and relativism where anything goes and nothing is fixed? Obviously, if we were to see teacher evaluation in terms of procedures where nothing is fixed and all opinions are accepted and cannot be questioned, we would not be able to have any defensible form of teacher evaluation at all. In this view, relativism is radical with each individual being his/her own source of truth.

But there is also a less radical view of relativism, i.e. that the source of truth lies not with the individual, but with each particular community or society. I shall now look at more detail what this form of relativism entails. In my exposition of this view of relativism, I shall draw considerably on Bernstein's analysis of this problematic concept. He asserts that relativism forces one to recognize that fundamental concepts such as rationality, truth, reality, right, the good,

or norms, "must be understood as relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society, or culture" (42). Thus, according to Bernstein,

... (for) the relativist, ... (t)here is a nonreducible plurality of such schemes, paradigms, and practices; there is no substantive overarching framework in which radically different and alternative schemes are commensurable - no universal standards that somehow stand outside of and above these competing alternatives (43).

My emphasis is on what Bernstein refers to as "criteria or standards of rationality". Rationality is about the human capacity to reason, which means "to challenge, develop and share clarity of insight by means of clarity of meaning, consistency in language-use, and coherence in the development of an argument" (44). Moreover, he claims that relativism means that these criteria or standards of rationality are always seen in terms of standards which by comparison differ and are linked to the pronouns "our" and "their". So, what makes the standards relative, is their appeal to notions such as "our" standards and "their" standards; and not THE standards, as referring to universal standards independent from any historical and temporal change. Hence, for relativism, there is no universal objective standards of rationality. In this way, at least, it seems that relativism breaks away from neutrality. But this is exactly what relativism fails to do. How does this happen? Relativists claim that there are no universal objective standards. For them, all standards are relative to the particular context.

Both these claims contain within them universal terms like "no" and "all", reflecting a universal truth. So the relativist argument is paradoxical since relativists state that there is no universal truth. The upshot of this argument is that relativists appeal to those same standards they so wish to refute (45). For this reason, I think relativism does not provide us with a defensible way of looking at teacher evaluation.

I shall now attempt to show that the current rating scale, if considered in terms of relativism, cannot work. The relativists assert that there are a multiple of incommensurable (i.e. different in terms of point to point comparison) standards. To tease out my argument, I shall use standards synonymously with criteria which are relative to a theoretical framework. Thus, if the criteria are appropriate they are commensurable with a particular framework of reference.

Let us consider an evaluator who embarks upon an evaluation process. In accordance with relativism, such an evaluator ought to be concerned about the practices of different teachers, because they do so on the basis of adhering to different standards and different conceptual schemes which, relativists would acknowledge, differ from situation to situation and from place to place. So, the question is how would an evaluator know that a teacher gave a "good" lesson?

How would he/she ever know, if standards are incommensurable? On what grounds can an evaluator claim that one teacher is better than another if multiple standards exist? A teacher might claim that his/her lesson is "good" as it complies to his/her standard; a standard relative to the school's culture. Would this not mean that teacher evaluation becomes redundant? How can teacher evaluation ever be done if there are no set standards or criteria for teacher evaluation? Thus, if there cannot exist any form of teacher evaluation because of the absence of criteria, can one speak of objective teacher evaluation? According to relativism, the answer would be no, because objective teacher evaluation in relativist terms would not be possible.

In summary then, if we get rid of neutrality it does not mean we end up with relativism. Radical relativism with each person being the source of truth is just impossible if we hold that holding defensible positions is imperative for teaching practices. Relativism can also mean that each community or group is the source of truth. Why is this an unacceptable position to hold in teaching practices? The problem arises when we ask: What is a group? Two or three people, a region, a nation? Are we not still in the same dilemma as the radical relativist but now on a larger scale? In terms of what can we say x is good and y is bad? How are incommensurable standards handled? Relativists can give no clear answers to these crucial questions. Neither kinds of relativism mentioned

above, is appropriate for teaching practices, but since we do need some standards or criteria in terms of which we can judge that x is good and y is bad, we need to rescue the notion of objectivity, but not in terms of neutrality. Therefore, in the next section I shall look at the notion of intersubjectivity, to ascertain whether it can rescue the notion of objectivity and hence objective teacher evaluation.

### 2.3 OBJECTIVITY IN TERMS OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Much that has been discussed hitherto involved a notion of standards or criteria. I have shown that "neutral standards" and "relative standards" are highly problematic. The argument I want to pursue now, is whether "intersubjective standards" can give meaning to the notion of objectivity which is an important one for teaching practices. But first, I need to clarify what I mean by standards.

The meaning of standards itself is problematic. However, I shall attempt to explicate standards in the following way. In his book, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism, Richard Bernstein frequently speaks about "standards of rationality". Unwittingly he steers clear of what standards are, thus leaving the concept undefined. By no means do I intend to give a definition of standards. However, what I picked up in my study of Bernstein's book is that he always couples the concept of standards to other linguistic concepts such as

rules, rationality, procedures, experiences, reasons, beliefs, actions, culture, to mention but a few. So, in his use of the concept standards, I think what is meant is to articulate the concept of standards in relation to human beings; for the reason that human beings have histories, cultures, beliefs, attitudes, ways of reasoning, actions, and therefore practices. My use of the concept standards points towards the practices of human beings, who themselves constitute communities and societies; a claim which I shall attempt to clarify in my exposition of intersubjectivity.

I shall now give attention to the notion of "intersubjective standards" as opposed to "neutral" and "relative standards". In my exposition of the concept intersubjectivity, I draw overwhelmingly on the analysis done by Charles Taylor. I shall also try to use illuminating examples of my own to make sense of his analysis. What makes standards intersubjective?

Firstly, I have stated that standards involve the practices of human beings. But these practices are established in the institutions of a society. Moreover, societies change from time to time because of different historical conditions and social rules which prevail. For the reason that societies do not remain stagnant, it follows that practices also change. So, by their nature and history, practices are different over the passage of time (46). Since practices involve standards, one concludes that standards are also shaped by the historical

development of societies. But what are these practices?

Practices are constituted by a certain language established in a society; a vocabulary essential to these practices (47). If one considers teacher evaluation to be a human practice, then the underlying features which constitute such a practice, can be that the evaluator enters scores, the evaluator uses particular criteria and concepts for assessment, the evaluation report remains the property of the evaluator, and that evaluation is only done twice a year. Thus, the evaluation activity has to bear on intentional descriptions which fall within a certain established range before it can be referred to as teacher evaluation. Hence, some practice is teacher evaluation if "it has to do in part with the vocabulary established in a society as appropriate for engaging in it or describing it" (48). Language in this sense, does not refer to a kind of "linguistic dialect", but rather to the relation of human beings to others in a society; the way they understand and make sense of each other's practices, the way they interpret each other's discourse. Moreover, implicit in this scenario is that practices are interwoven with certain norms, such as the norm that the evaluator is the autonomous person making decisions as far as the practices of teachers are concerned; the norm that the evaluation process is done to improve the practices of teachers; and the norm that teacher evaluation is at best a rational way of telling teachers that their practices are being monitored by "experts"

who can give meaningful guidance to them. But then, this is precisely what does not always happen. The norms that teacher evaluation is "good" and "rational" are not understood in the same way by teachers in different societies with different schools. Let us consider an example. Some teachers in the Western Cape affiliated to the South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU) are opposed to the norms of the current rating scale instrument. On the contrary, others might be in support of the teacher evaluation instrument. Why is this so? The conclusion is that the norms of "good", "rational" and "autonomous" teacher evaluation are not all understood in the same way by different teachers, as well as by the different people involved in the evaluation process, i.e. the rater and the teacher being rated. In the words of Taylor:

The meaning of these terms is opaque to them because they have a different structure of experiential meaning open to them (49).

In addition, the range of meaning open to teachers who accept the current rating scale is different to those who reject the teacher evaluation instrument.

This brings us to the meaning of intersubjectivity. For Taylor, human beings in societies do not just have a given set of ideas and goals to which they subscribe. He posits that:

The meanings and norms implicit in these practices are not just in the minds of the actors but are out there in the practices themselves, practices which cannot be conceived



as a set of individual actions, but which are essentially modes of social relation, of mutual action (50). (my emphasis)

If I relate my understanding of this claim to the practice of teacher evaluation, then it follows that teacher evaluation cannot only be conceived of as a practice which is based on individual ideas, beliefs, attitudes, understandings, interpretations and experiences - as in the case of relativists, but rather the result of intersubjective practices, that which Taylor refers to as modes of social relation, of mutual action. Intersubjective ideas and norms are CONSTITUTIVE of the practice itself. These intersubjective norms are not the property of individuals in a society, but "are constitutive of the social matrix in which individuals find themselves and act" (51). Thus, intersubjective standards imply that human beings in society have a common language which is constituted in their social practices and which shapes and is shaped by these practices. These standards are not owned by individuals or groups, but are rooted in the social practices of human beings.

Furthermore, what is this common language which intersubjectivity gives human beings? Does it mean that to have a common language or practice is to share that language or practice? What sense can be made of a notion of "sharing"? Once again I shall draw on Taylor, who makes a distinction between "shared goods" and "convergent goods":

By 'shared good', I mean something different and stronger than mere convergent good, where people may have a common interest in something. A good is shared when part of what makes it a good is precisely that it is shared, that is sought after and cherished in common. Thus the inhabitants of a river valley have a common interest in preventing floods. This is to say that each one has an interest in the same flood prevention, and this is so irrespective of whether they form a community at all. By contrast, shared goods are essentially of a community; their common appreciation is constitutive of them (52).

Thus, for human beings to have shared practices, and thus standards, does not mean that they merely have to reach agreement between each other. That would be a convergent practice. To have shared standards, implies that human beings have to nurture and develop those standards which are constituted in the social practices of a community; standards which were not conjured up on the basis of what was arbitrarily decided, but standards which developed out of the practices of a community, i.e. standards which are constituted in a community's social practices, and which, in turn strengthen that community.

In essence, intersubjective practices, hence standards are "... ways of experiencing action in (a) society which are expressed in the language and descriptions constitutive of institutions and practices ..." (53). Finally, I want to claim that if standards are to be conceived of as objective, then they should be seen in terms of a notion of intersubjectivity, of shared norms. I shall now attempt to explain what sense can be made of teacher evaluation in terms of intersubjectivity.

#### 2.4 INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND TEACHER EVALUATION

In the light of the above exposition of intersubjectivity, I wish to state my claim. I hold that the concept objectivity in terms of intersubjectivity is a fruitful approach to address a contentious matter such as teacher evaluation. I shall attempt to develop this argument in the manner set out below.

The concept of teacher evaluation is essentially about the practices of human beings. For the reason that these human practices are grounded in the institutions (schools, colleges, universities, etc.) of a society, and a society in turn was and is shaped by particular social rules and historical conditions, can it be said that the concept teacher evaluation is located within changing social and historical contexts. This is so, if one considers how the concept teacher evaluation has undergone significant historical changes. As early as the 1920s, teacher evaluation required the identification of personality traits and personal characteristics of teachers to differentiate effective from ineffective teachers (54). Between the 1930s and 1950s, rating scales, as a technique to measure teacher practices were dominant (our own teacher evaluation system is a rating scale). Since the 1960s, attention has been focused on the systematic observation of teacher practices in the classroom. The point I wish to make is that these teacher evaluation

procedures did not come about because certain individuals felt that changes had to be made. These decisions to improve teacher evaluation procedures were informed by the norms constituting the evaluation procedures. By this I mean that evaluation theorists as members of a particular research community recognized the need for change on the basis of what they share as a community. To illustrate this point further, namely that teacher evaluation practices are grounded in the norms of evaluation practices, I shall make use of the "interaction analysis" technique pioneered (in contrast to invented, as this would reflect a notion of individuality) by Flanders. This approach to teacher evaluation entails the following norms:

- (1) The evaluator observes and records the verbal classroom behaviour of teachers.
- (2) This lesson can be summarized and prescribed for subsequent analysis and discussion.
- (3) The observer is trained to classify the verbal statements of classroom communication into one of ten categories every three seconds (55).

These norms of the "interaction analysis technique" are not the property of Flanders. Hence, they are not owned by the beliefs, ideas and attitudes of Flanders, but rather constituted in the evaluation technique itself. Therefore, in this way the norms, and thus standards of the evaluation

technique are shared by the evaluation community. Subsequently, a great many other standards pertaining to this evaluation technique have emerged to the fore, as a result of the shared efforts of evaluation theorists who form an evaluation community. In this way, the teacher evaluation practice becomes intersubjective. In conclusion, I contend that teacher evaluation can be objective, but then it should be seen in terms of a notion of intersubjectivity.

To sum up, I have attempted to show the unacceptability of the concept objectivity in terms of neutrality, primarily because neutrality lays claim to universal or generalized standards. For this reason, an objective teacher evaluation system in terms of "neutral standards" is simply not on. Then, I have pointed out the unfeasibility of a teacher evaluation system in terms of relativism. In my view, a "relative" teacher evaluation system would mean no system at all. Finally, I claimed that teacher evaluation can be objective providing it rests on a premise of intersubjectivity; involving the shared evaluation practices of the evaluation community. This concept of "community" is exactly the concept I want to look at more closely. In order to do so, I shall also refer to another problematic concept, namely democracy.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. TEACHER EVALUATION, COMMUNITY AND DEMOCRACY

In the previous chapter, I have attempted to show that teacher evaluation can be objective provided it is seen in terms of a notion of intersubjectivity. One of the significant concepts which emerged from this exposition is that of community. I concluded the chapter by claiming that a teacher evaluation community ought to have shared, common, intersubjective standards if a teacher evaluation system is going to be objective. However, this notion of community needs to be looked at more closely.

Thus, in this chapter, I shall attempt to clarify the concept community. Then, I shall look at a concept of democracy and show that the concepts democracy and community could have a lot in common, especially in relation to teacher evaluation. Moreover, I shall address the kind of community most likely to fit a notion of democracy. Finally, I shall briefly attend to important concepts underlying community, democracy and objectivity, in particular the notions of freedom, accountability, power, authority and participation.

#### 3.1 COMMUNITY

The concept community has been a subject of unabated

discussion for many philosophers and historians. For instance, Benedict Anderson articulates a concept of community which is grounded in a notion that to imagine ourselves as members of a community, implies that there exists a certain bond or recognizable feeling of closeness amongst us (56). On the other hand, and most recently, Richard Rorty develops a different concept of community which he claims to be contingent, thus being no grounding for the concept at all (57). However, to develop a concept of community along these lines, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, in my view, the concept community (Gemeinschaft) which Francis Dunlop depicts, seems to be a useful way of looking at this concept, particularly in relation to teacher evaluation.

Dunlop makes a clear distinction between Gesellschaft (association) and Gemeinschaft (community). He contends that a Gesellschaft comprises people grouped together as equals. For him, Gesellschaft

... regards the individual person as though he [I think Dunlop also meant the feminine form] were an isolated unit who had 'come together' with other hitherto isolated units because his [or her] aims and purposes (and those of others) can be more rationally and efficiently served by association with others than by remaining on his [or her] own ... Thus he [or she] is prepared to co-operate with others, but on the basis of formal contracts, agreements or promises; he [or she] is ready to put up with rules, restrictions and explicit conventions ... provided they apply equally to everyone covered by them (58).

Thus in a Gesellschaft, people are put together as one interest group on a voluntary basis. They are bounded by a

contract which opens space for equality amongst them. Dunlop further claims that the individuals constituting the Gesellschaft are "free and autonomous", and can easily "withdraw from the association".

How does this view of Gesellschaft tie up with a teacher evaluation community? Strike et al express a view that teacher evaluation has a moral context, in the sense that it is designed to promote fairness (59). Moreover, they look at fairness in terms of "equal respect of persons", whereby teacher evaluation ought to respect the dignity of teachers as human beings, as well as "reasonableness", which carries with it the idea that teacher evaluation practices ought not to be based on arbitrary and capricious decisions on the part of whatever personnel implements the teacher evaluation system (60). Implicit in what Strike et al articulate is a view which does not fit the notion of Gesellschaft. Individuals cannot be free to make decisions whereby the dignity of teachers is at stake. In fact, individuals could be trapped into the very notion of radical relativism. Neither can individuals act with the kind of autonomy suggested by a Gesellschaft in a sensitive matter such as teacher evaluation, which according to Strike et al, has a moral point which precludes the use of evaluation to harass or belittle teachers (61). Moreover, according to a Gesellschaft equal rules and restrictions are applicable to all its members. By implication, the evaluator then is governed by the same rules as the evaluatee. So, does



this mean that because the evaluator sits at the back of the classroom, the teacher could do the same while teaching a lesson? This is absurd, as both the evaluator and evaluatee ought to comply to different rules. For this reason, there ought not to be equality between the evaluator and evaluatee. Equality would mean that they are bounded by the same rules. (However, this non-equality of rules does not mean that there is no equal dignity. As Strike et al note, equal respect is necessary if the evaluation process is to be a fruitful one.) If both evaluator and evaluatee are to be governed by equal rules and restrictions, then it would be difficult to distinguish between the two individuals. Then, we might not have evaluation at all. Hence, Gesellschaft poses serious problems, not only for teacher evaluation, but also the notion of what a teacher evaluation community ought to be. In fact, an understanding of a teacher evaluation community in terms of a Gesellschaft only, seems to threaten the notion of intersubjectivity. Whereas intersubjectivity restricts the freedom of the individual as a member of the community, a Gesellschaft allows the individual to be "free and autonomous".

On the other hand, Dunlop articulates a view of Gemeinschaft (community) whereby the individual with his/her wants and ideas are not as important as the group to which he/she belongs. In a Gemeinschaft,

... members trust and know what to expect from both their

fellows and those who are in different positions in the hierarchy; under the often tacit guidance of the old or wise, ... a common mind emerges, the occasional dispute or quarrel dissolves itself in ritual or ceremony ... Though the individual may not be so highly regarded as a unique person, there is (or can be ) affection, closeness, fraternity; each member of the group has and knows his (or her) unique place in it, and there is an ubiquitous sense of belonging together (62).

So, a Gemeinschaft is characterized by norms, traditions, hierarchy, as well as those subjecting themselves to the "tacit guidance of the old or wise". The question however remains how this understanding of community links up with a particular view of a teacher evaluation community. Who constitute a teacher evaluation community?

In accordance with a concept of Gemeinschaft, a teacher evaluation community consists of human beings having an unequal status: (but with equal dignity) a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft comprises (1) those who decide on the teacher evaluation policy, (2) those who see to the implementation thereof, and (3) those about whom judgements are made. However, those teacher evaluation policy makers do not merely make capricious decisions based on whim but, in accordance with Gemeinschaft, do so on the basis of systematically applied rules and standards (63). These teacher evaluation policies are governed by a particular tradition. For example, Strike et al assert that these policies ought to be a matter of public record and that they should be written with precision, clarity and detail as is consistent with the nature

of the decisions to be made - which include a statement of criteria of acceptable teaching, namely that the criteria for teacher evaluation should be broad enough to encompass all characteristics of teacher performance which the administrators deem relevant to assess teacher competence (64 ). Furthermore, since each individual in a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft knows what to expect, it becomes necessary to communicate these teacher evaluation policies to teachers, thus "making sure that the rules for personal decisions are understood by those affected by them" (65) (In South Africa, many of the teachers seem to be unaware of the teacher evaluation policies most likely to affect them ). Moreover, a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft also includes those who have to implement these teacher evaluation policies. These evaluators in a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft need to be trusted by their evaluatees, mostly teachers. This trust could be fostered in many ways. For example, some ways of securing the trust between evaluator and evaluatee in a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft could be that:

- (1) the evaluator evaluates teachers according to shared standards constituted in the evaluation process on a regular basis,
- (2) the evaluation results are made known to and discussed with teachers,
- (3) the rules of the evaluation procedure are uniformly applied, i.e. similar information is collected about all

teachers and judgements are based upon similar standards for all teachers,

(4) and that the teachers ought not to be evaluated on hearsay, rumour or unchecked complaints (66).

Finally, in a teacher evaluation *Gemeinschaft*, the relationship between evaluator and evaluatee ought to be according to a hierarchical fashion - which implies that they are not governed by equal rules. However, this does not preclude teachers from participating in the evaluation process. For example, Strike et al point out that a school has on its staff teachers with a history of excellence in the classroom. They assert that a mechanism ought to be created whereby "the expertise and experience of these teachers can be brought to bear in cases in which less experienced or less competent teachers can profit from them" (67). Nevertheless, a teacher in a teacher evaluation *Gemeinschaft* remains different from an evaluator.

In summary, a teacher evaluation community incorporates the legislators - who ought to have expertise, experience and make informed judgements, the supervisors or inspectors who should see to the implementation of the teacher evaluation policies, and the teachers whose role is mostly restricted to that of participating evaluatees. Moreover, this teacher evaluation *Gemeinschaft* is bound by particular shared norms, standards and rules of teacher evaluation, a notion which finds

expression in intersubjectivity. The question however remains how this notion of a teacher evaluation community ties up with the concept of democracy. What does democracy mean? This brings me to my next section, in which I shall attempt to address a particular concept of democracy.

### 3.2 DEMOCRACY

Dunlop asserts that both a *Gesellschaft* and a *Gemeinschaft* entail elements of a democracy. Whereas a *Gemeinschaft* limits democratic participation, a *Gesellschaft* creates more space for democratic participation. Furthermore he posits that both these concepts "have good and bad sides so then the question is: What is appropriate where?" (68). In order to explain what he means, I shall use examples of my own. Let us consider a teacher evaluation community which operates, firstly on the basis of *Gesellschaft* elements, then, secondly, on the basis of *Gemeinschaft* elements.

A *Gesellschaft* presupposes the voluntary coming together of, say teachers and evaluators to implement an evaluation procedure or to develop an evaluation system. The good thing about this situation could be that teachers have some recognized role in the evaluation process. For example, in this way teachers could participate directly in the working out of some kind of remedial teacher evaluation procedure, whereby those teachers whose performances are judged as

substantially deficient, could be improved by it. In contrast to this situation, a Gesellschaft would also permit teachers to withdraw from the evaluation process, meaning that they can refuse to be evaluated in that a Gesellschaft is a voluntary coming together of equals and from whom an individual is free to withdraw. Another example could also be that teachers have an unlimited input into the formulation of criteria for the evaluation process. In short, in a teacher evaluation Gesellschaft there could exist a free for all.

By contrast, in a Gemeinschaft, teachers cannot withdraw from the evaluation process at whim. They are expected to cooperate and participate with the evaluators to ensure that the evaluation is achieved. Teachers come to understand that evaluations are necessary to make personnel decisions intended to improve the quality of their teaching. In short, democracy in a Gemeinschaft is different to democracy in a Gesellschaft. Can we talk of different democracies in which one form of democratic involvement is more appropriate in a particular context than some other form of democratic practice? How can we flesh out Dunlop's question "What is appropriate where?" for democratic teacher evaluation practices? In order to address these questions, I shall now look at Macpherson's concept of democracy so as to make sense of a democratic teacher evaluation community in terms of a Gemeinschaft.

Macpherson points out three kinds of democracy:

(1) The Western liberal democracy, brought into being to serve the need of the competitive market society; a product of successfully developing capitalist market societies.

(2) The non-liberal Communist democracy, whereby a class state was created by the proletarian revolution, which had the job of holding down the old ruling class while transforming the whole society in such a way that there would be no more basis for exploitative classes and no more need for class state; thus paving the way for a fully human society.

(3) The non-liberal, non-Communist democracy in Third World States, which rejects the competitive ethos of the market society and sees no need for the competitive system of political parties. It sees the possibility of operating as a classless society and state (69).

Macpherson asserts that these three different forms of democracy have a common goal, namely "to provide the conditions for full and free development of the essential human capacities of all the members of the society" (my emphasis) (70). Furthermore, he claims that these kinds of democracy "differ in their views as to what conditions are needed, and to how ... to achieve those conditions" (71). In this minithesis, I shall not become embroiled in the debates about the various kinds of democracies and the pros and cons

of different systems, but shall use Macpherson's notion of what is common to all forms of democracies in order to look at what could possibly constitute democratic teacher evaluation practices. Another view of democracy which is compatible with Macpherson's understanding, is that accentuated by Jacques Barzun in 1989. He holds that

... a democracy cannot be fashioned out of whatever people happen to be around in a given region ... a cluster of disparate elements and conditions is needed for a democracy to be born viable. Among these conditions one can name tradition (my emphases) ... (72).

So, for a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft to be democratic, it has to have a tradition, i.e. particular social and historical conditions ought to have shaped the development of the concept. In other words, a democracy is not something imposed from outside, but is something which grows out of the community itself, a common understanding shaped and informed by tradition and social and historical conditions. What are the conditions which are needed to make sense of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft? Let us consider the fact that the history of teaching is that it carries with it a tradition of involving the lives of students which are altered in far-reaching and significant ways by their teachers; thus it is too important to be conducted without critical inquiry into its worth (73), i.e. evaluation. In addition, teacher evaluation carries with it a tradition "such as improving teacher performance, aiding administrative decisions, guiding students in course selections, meeting state and institutional



mandates, promoting research on teaching, and the like" (74). For this reason, some individuals had to assume leadership roles - whether as principal, administrator or professional evaluator - to conduct the evaluation of teaching and teachers (75). Hence, the institution of hierarchy arose out of certain conditions which historically shaped the course of teacher evaluation. Furthermore, teacher evaluation procedures have been a corollary of theoretically supported research on the part of evaluation theorists. These theorists took into account influences such as the nature of educational policies, the organizational arrangement of schools, resources, community characteristics, which all shaped the development of the concept teacher evaluation. In essence, teacher evaluation is a process with a tradition which was shaped by certain historical conditions. If this understanding is linked to Dunlop's question about "What is appropriate where?", then it can be claimed that different conditions make different forms of democracy appropriate as different historical conditions shape our understanding of different forms of democracy. However, whatever the form of democracy it always, as Macpherson holds, creates conditions for the full and free development of essential human characteristics.

How does the argument above inform my understanding of teacher evaluation? If teacher evaluation practices are to be constituted in a democratic Gemeinschaft, then particular hierarchical conditions ought to facilitate the full and free

development of all participants in the evaluation process. For example, instead of telling a teacher that evaluation would be done on such and such a day, the evaluator in consultation with the teacher jointly establish a date for evaluation. In this way the evaluator encourages the full involvement of the evaluatee in the evaluation process. The evaluator uses his/her hierarchical position to create certain conditions to establish a particular kind of democratic teacher evaluation practice. Another example is that the evaluator discusses the evaluation results with the evaluatee who in turn could make informed and critical judgements about his/her performance in the classroom. Therefore it follows that teachers are encouraged to freely accept the hierarchy and rules (that could curb their freedom) which will help them to become better teachers. Since, we assume, they want to become better teachers it is in their own interest that they uphold the accepted evaluation procedures, and so give it validity. Thus, the different kind of democracy which might be constituted in a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft has as a result a teacher evaluation system which promotes the full involvement of evaluators and evaluatees. If this is what a hierarchical type of democracy could achieve, then I certainly go along with it. This immediately brings me to my next move. I shall now attempt to examine whether a link could exist between this kind of democracy, a community in terms of Gemeinschaft, and a notion of intersubjectivity.

### 3.3 DEMOCRACY, COMMUNITY AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

In the previous chapter, I have already pointed out that a teacher evaluation system could be objective on the basis that such a system is rooted in the common, shared, intersubjective standards of the teacher evaluation community. Subsequently, I have shown what could be meant by a teacher evaluation community, one grounded in a concept of Gemeinschaft. Then I went on to depict how such a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft creates space for a particular view of democracy. I shall now discuss whether this view of democracy could be linked to a notion of intersubjectivity.

I hold that there is a connection between the two concepts. I already mentioned that Barzun articulates a view of democracy which precludes a notion of "whatever people happen to be around". What this means, is that not just any people with different wants, needs and aspirations could make a democracy (76). From this, I deduce that people with common and shared interests informed by tradition could constitute a kind of hierarchical democracy - whereby people informed by teacher evaluation procedures interact and share their ideas with each other. Thus, in this way, a connection exists between a certain community and a kind of hierarchical democracy founded on conditions which make such a democracy workable. Considering the fact that similar conditions to which shaped this kind of hierarchical democracy, could also give rise to

the emergence of a Gemeinschaft, it follows that a hierarchical democracy could be linked to a Gemeinschaft concept of community in which democracy becomes workable. But then, the common and shared interests of such a community find expression in a notion of intersubjectivity. Hence, the concept of a workable democracy could be connected to a notion of intersubjectivity.

To summarize, a teacher evaluation system which is objective can simultaneously be democratic, on condition that these concepts are grounded in a notion of intersubjectivity. In the light of this analysis, I shall henceforth refer to an objective and democratic teacher evaluation system as a system of teacher appraisal in order to distinguish it from non-objective, non-democratic teacher evaluation systems. Furthermore, to make sense of such a system of teacher appraisal, I shall look at concepts such as freedom, accountability, power, authority and participation, for the reason that these concepts could influence the viability of such a system of teacher appraisal.

### 3.4 IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN A SYSTEM OF TEACHER APPRAISAL

#### 3.4.1 TEACHER APPRAISAL AND FREEDOM

Implicit in my exposition of an objective and democratic teacher evaluation system, i.e. a system of teacher appraisal,

is an understanding that the participants in the evaluation process ought to have a particular kind of freedom, a freedom which could enhance the validity of the teacher appraisal system, i.e. a system that is accepted and supported by all those involved in it. But what kind of freedom seems to be the most desirable to make sense of such a system of teacher appraisal?

I contend that Berlin's view of positive freedom is the most appropriate kind of freedom which could ensure the validity of a system of teacher appraisal. What is positive freedom, and how does it link up with a system of teacher appraisal? For Berlin, positive freedom undermines the notion of individual freedom. Instead, the individual is part of an organic community, which I regard as a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft. In this way, he believes that the individual could understand the freedom of other members of the community, for the individual "is no longer ... (one) ... with his [or her] actual wishes or needs ... but (part of a collective community) ... identified with the pursuit of some ideal (common) purpose ..." (77). What are the implications of this notion of positive freedom for a system of teacher appraisal?

Earlier in this chapter, I already pointed out that a teacher evaluation community is bounded by common, shared intersubjective standards. By implication members of the

community cannot enjoy a kind of unlimited freedom, as their needs and aspirations are expressive of the community itself; limited freedom creates a situation which does not preclude democracy at all since democracy cannot be a free-for-all kind of system. Chaos and the complete breakdown of the community itself would result.

In looking at the place of freedom in teacher evaluation, the question now arises whether teacher appraisal could take the form of self-evaluation, which precludes the evaluation of teachers by others namely inspectors, department heads, administrators or principals; a set-up considered by many as being undemocratic in that it limits individual freedom. What is self-evaluation? For Elliot, self-evaluation involves "the teacher's activity of practical reflection about himself/herself ... namely being aware of his/her own actions, consequences of actions and moral responsibility for these consequences" (78). Undoubtedly, self-evaluation could be a good way for teachers to reflect critically on their teaching practices, and thus to improve on them. However, this kind of evaluation from below is not sufficient. Why not? In fact, self-evaluation in its extreme, gives to the individual complete autonomy, which could have far-reaching implications for the notion of evaluation itself. What are going to be the criteria by which a teacher is going to judge himself/herself? Are they criteria which will show himself/herself to be a good teacher? Are the test results of his/her pupils going to tell

him/her that he/she is doing an excellent teaching job? In my view, self-evaluation ONLY appears to be relativistic, as the self-monitoring process primarily involves the standards of the individual. Self-evaluation can be fruitful, but my argument is against the view that all evaluation ought to be self-evaluation. Moreover, the notion of evaluation and in particular critical reflection involves having to be able to distantiate oneself from one's own practices and try to look at them from a different perspective. This is both a very difficult and threatening thing to do. It is not something we can assume all teachers will do competently and willingly when evaluating their own practices. Therefore, to obviate the kind of uncertainty which self-evaluation could bring about, guided and informed evaluation seems to be a reasonable form of teacher evaluation. But then, the standard, controlled measures of evaluation ought to reflect the common, shared, intersubjective standards of the evaluation process as accepted by all those involved. And this intersubjective system to which those involved, from policy formulators, to evaluators, to the teachers being evaluated, freely subject themselves and accept the rules and conventions which govern the process (and which limits individual freedom then in particular contexts) brings about a particular kind of democracy; in short, a democracy that is shared and which, at the same time, limits individual freedom.

#### 3.4.2 TEACHER APPRAISAL AND ACCOUNTABILITY

It is certainly beyond the scope of this minithesis to delve into the whole debate about accountability. Instead, I proceed from the premise that a teacher evaluation community ought to be held accountable for being in control of a teacher appraisal system. To be accountable is to be under an obligation to provide a justification for what is being done (79). In other words, the teacher evaluation community must be able to justify its practices in terms of common, shared conventions so that it implements and develops defensible standards of evaluation. How does this view of accountability link up with teacher appraisal? I shall try to flesh out briefly the question: Who is accountable to whom for what?

According to the understanding of accountability which I uphold, members of a teacher evaluation community are not necessarily state politicians, neither is the teacher evaluation system dependent on the whims of these state bureaucrats and the like. A teacher evaluation community ought to be accountable to its clientele, namely its members - decision makers, evaluators and teachers. To them, a teacher evaluation community is obliged to justify its decisions and activities to its own members in the light of the standards and criteria which are constitutive of the evaluation process i.e. intersubjectivity. This does not mean that a teacher evaluation community ignores the wishes of, say central or local government, school boards, school committees, parents



and pupils, but it reserves the right to consider their wishes in the light of the defensible standards and criteria constitutive of the evaluation system and as developed in terms of certain shared conventions. In essence, a teacher evaluation community does not do its own thing. It comprises a particular kind of organization whose primary aim is to implement and maintain the defensible objectives constitutive of the teacher appraisal system. One possible objection which I think could be levelled at this understanding of accountability is that a teacher evaluation community enjoys considerable power, as well as authority. What this objection does not take into account is that this understanding of accountability as spelt out above is rooted in a particular understanding of power and authority. I shall now attempt to give some consideration to an understanding of both power and authority in the light of the particular kind of teacher appraisal under discussion.

#### 3.4.3 TEACHER APPRAISAL, POWER AND AUTHORITY

Teacher evaluators are seen by many, especially teachers, as state bureaucrats, representing a central education authority which gives them the power to exercise top-down control. These evaluators are assumingly considered as outsiders who use their authority to ensure that evaluation is done. In the context of the kind of teacher appraisal system under discussion, in my view, these evaluators ought to EXERCISE

power and to HAVE authority, but a different sort of power and authority critics traditionally do not conceive of. In this section, I shall attempt to say what could be meant by both power and authority akin to a democratic and objective system of teacher evaluation, i.e. a system of teacher appraisal.

Power ought to be distinguished from a related concept such as authority. What is power? Brian Fay articulates a particular concept of power in the following way:

A exercises power with respect to B when A does x a causal outcome of which is that B does y which B would not have done without the occurrence of x (80).

When one contextualizes this understanding of power in terms of teacher evaluation, it follows that the evaluator, when doing the evaluation, EXERCISES power with respect to a teacher who in turn prepares himself/herself for the evaluation; something he/she would not have done if it was not that he/she would be evaluated. This understanding of power does not depict itself as a "purely external force impressing itself on the will of others" (81). For Fay, power is dyadic in the sense that it invokes the self-understandings of the powerful and the powerless. He holds that power should arise out of the interaction between both the powerless and powerful, making a necessary contribution to ensure its existence (82). To make sense of this notion of power, as an example, I shall use a format of a pre-evaluation conference between evaluator and evaluatee suggested by Goldhammer et al.

The format is as follows:

(1) The evaluator establishes an agreement with the evaluatee concerning lesson objectives, activities to be observed, and problems or items the evaluatee wants feedback on. This points to an intersubjective procedure.

(2) The evaluator negotiates the time, length and place of observation.

(3) The evaluator suggests specific plans for carrying out the classroom observation, such as where the evaluator shall sit, whether the evaluator should interact with the students, and how the evaluator will leave the evaluation (83).

Important to note is that the evaluator sets the ground rules for the evaluation to come, but at the same time the evaluatee is given an opportunity to have a say. What it means, is that the evaluator does not give instructions without involving the evaluatee. Rather, the evaluator justifies the groundrules in terms of shared standards and involves the evaluatee who accepts these instructions as being reasonable. It can be said that the evaluator persuades the evaluatee to accept the format of evaluation through an informed discussion. Coming back to the main question whether the evaluator ought to exercise power, the answer is yes, for the reason that power can be non-abusive. Thus, the self-understanding of both evaluator and evaluatee is invoked. This sort of power seems particularly

amenable to a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft intent on carrying out objective and democratic teacher evaluation, for the reason that both a dyadic concept of power and a Gemeinschaft allow the evaluatees to participate in the evaluation process; a kind of hierarchical participation, which nevertheless IS democratic because it creates conditions whereby the teacher can develop essential teacher characteristics more fully.

Authority is different from power. I contend that the evaluator ought to occupy a position of authority. He/she has to HAVE authority. What does authority mean? In order to expound on this concept more fully, it would be useful to draw on Kenneth Strike who claims the following about authority:

... those who have mastered the concepts of a discipline are uniquely qualified to render competent judgements about inquiry and learning. The authority of ideas leads to the authority of those who possess them over the institution that deals with ideas (84).

In terms of the evaluator's authority, I discern from this view that, unless the evaluator has received expert training and has mastered the evaluation procedure, he/she would not be in a position to make competent judgements about teachers. The authority the evaluator HAS is rooted in his/her intellectual competence. The evaluator has expert knowledge about the standards and criteria that govern the evaluation procedure. Darling-Hammond et al recommend that all evaluators should undergo extensive training in observation and evaluation

techniques, including reporting, diagnosis and clinical supervision (85). Only then, the evaluator would be in an expert, authoritative position to make informed judgements about teachers' performances in the classroom. Furthermore, these judgements relate to "a whole set of intellectual standards and criteria imbedded in the current state of a discipline" (86), where the discipline in this case is teacher evaluation. In other words, authority has to do with having the expertise to make informed judgements and to be able to justify (accountability) them in terms of the common, shared conventions of the evaluation process (intersubjectivity) in order to help teachers develop appropriate teaching characteristics (democracy). In this way authority is linked to the notions of accountability, intersubjectivity and democracy as developed thus far.

Another point to consider is that an evaluator's authority over a teacher gives rise to a situation of "inequality (which) is related to the respective individuals ..." (87). Thus, the evaluator remains the "expert" and a teacher the "novice". In addition, this kind of unequal relationship between evaluator and evaluatee can be compatible with a notion of a democratic teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft. For the reason that a Gemeinschaft is connected to a notion of intersubjectivity, it follows that both evaluator and evaluatee participate and accept the rules and conventions governing the evaluation process, including its necessary hierarchical

structure in terms of authority. From this it follows that this sort of authority could contribute to the objective and democratic nature of a system of teacher appraisal.

In summary, I have attempted to highlight the important roles the concepts power and authority could play in the making of a system of teacher appraisal. In doing so, I implicitly stressed the importance of a notion of participation in a system of teacher appraisal. I shall now attempt to give a short exposition of the concept participation in relation to a system of teacher appraisal, particularly how participation ought to affect the members of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft.

#### 3.4.4 TEACHER APPRAISAL AND PARTICIPATION

I have already pointed out that a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft is characterized by an unequal, hierarchical relationship between its members. Also, all members of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft do participate in the implementation and maintenance of its system of teacher appraisal, but as unequals, a situation which develops a different kind of democracy. The question however remains whether an evaluator and evaluatee could fully participate as unequals in the evaluation process. But firstly, I need to say something about participation.

Hoy and Miskel point out the desirability of participation in decision making, which according to them should vary from situation to situation. What they mean by this is that the roles and functions of both teachers and administrators need to vary according to the nature of the situation (88). This view of participation fits in with the participatory roles both the evaluator and evaluatee, in my view, ought to occupy. If the evaluator and evaluatee's roles need to vary because of the hierarchical nature of the evaluation system, then they ought to occupy unequal roles in the evaluation Gemeinschaft. But, at the same time the morale and enthusiasm of teachers ought to be kept. How? Darling-Hammond et al found that the success of a teacher evaluation system relies on a collegial approach, which I discern as a process of unequal participation between the evaluator and evaluatee but in which the evaluatee, nevertheless, feels that his/her participation is not merely cosmetic or passive. This process of collegiality involves the following procedures:

(1) A pre-observation conference between the evaluator and evaluatee, whereby the evaluator involves the evaluatee and negotiates the ground rules for the evaluation procedure.

(2) A classroom observation procedure, whereby the performance of an evaluatee is monitored in terms of shared criteria.

(3) A post-observation conference to discuss the evaluation results, to motivate the evaluatee and to give

guidance (89).

Thus, it seems as if collegiality affords both the evaluator and evaluatee a substantial degree of participation in the evaluation process. Despite this, the evaluator and evaluatee remain unequal participants in the evaluation process in that the evaluator occupies a position of justified authority, which means that with the mutual acceptance of the evaluation process the validity of the teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft is maintained. Important to note, is that the evaluator remains in a position of authority. Moreover, the evaluator is obliged to justify his/her decisions in the presence of the evaluatee, yet in accordance with the standards and criteria constitutive of the evaluation procedure. In essence, in this kind of unequal participation, both evaluator and evaluatee remain accountable to the ideals and principles constitutive of their system of teacher appraisal.

In conclusion of this chapter, it is clear that a teacher evaluation system could be objective and at the same time also democratic. But then, such a teacher evaluation system should be rooted in a particular kind of democracy and objectivity, one which entails Gemeinschaft elements. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the concepts freedom, accountability, power, authority and participation are important concepts in the making of an objective and democratic teacher evaluation system. Most of my discussion about teacher evaluation has



been what a democratic and objective evaluation system ought to be. It is now important to ascertain whether a South African teacher evaluation system can be both objective and democratic in the light of what has been discussed in this chapter and the preceding ones.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4. CAN A SOUTH AFRICAN TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM BE BOTH OBJECTIVE AND DEMOCRATIC?

In this chapter, my main task shall be to look at the existing education realities in South Africa and to show how they affect the current system of teacher evaluation. Then, I want to point out that the current South African system of teacher evaluation cannot qualify to lay claim to the kind of objectivity and democracy articulated in the preceding chapters. Finally, I shall address the question whether any system of teacher evaluation can at this stage in South Africa be both objective and democratic.

#### 4.1 IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION PROCESS A FORM OF GEMEINSCHAFT?

Earlier it was mentioned that the DNE is the sole legislating body which determines the national education policy. Thus, the policies for the current system of teacher evaluation were also autonomously established by the DNE. Who is the DNE and to whom is it accountable, i.e. to whom is it obliged to justify its decisions and activities? The DNE is headed by a Director-General who is accountable to the Minister of National Education, who alone "has policy-making functions" (90). Since the Minister of Education is a cabinet member, and

therefore a state politician, one can say that the DNE is accountable to the state/South African government. On the basis of this scenario alone, the system of teacher evaluation cannot be objective, neither democratic. Why not? The ruling South African government does not have the common, shared support of all South African citizens and in this way the Minister of National Education is accountable to a group whose very authority is not accepted, i.e. there is no intersubjectivity and hence no objectivity and democracy in the system. Furthermore, a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft comprises amongst others those who make the decisions pertaining to the teacher evaluation process. However, the central issue is one that involves the notion of accountability. In a Gemeinschaft, those who make the decisions for the teacher evaluation system, are accountable to the standards and criteria constitutive of the teacher evaluation practice itself as evolved through the intersubjective participation of all its members. As far as the South African system of teacher evaluation is concerned, those who establish the policies are accountable to the unrepresentative government. In fact, the DNE itself acknowledges its accountability to the government, which should be informed of whatever the DNE decides (91). Therefore, the fact that the DNE is accountable only to the South African government and not to the ideals and principles of its teacher evaluation system, is a major impediment in the way of it claiming to have an objective and democratic teacher

evaluation system.

Furthermore, as was mentioned in chapter 1 the South African education system comprises eighteen separate executive education departments, of which four of these departments are "mainly for Whites" - Education and Culture: House of Assembly (Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal and Cape Province), one department of Education and Culture: House of Delegates - "mainly for Indians", one Department of Education and Culture: House of Representatives - "mainly for Coloureds", one department of Education and Training in eighteen regions - "mainly for Blacks", and the rest of the education departments in the self-governing territories - Gazankulu, KaNgwane, Kwazulu, KwaNdebele, Qwaqwa, Lebowa - and TBVC states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (92). Then, there are four Ministers of Education, namely the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Assembly - representing the four White education departments, the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration House of Representatives - representing the Coloured education department, the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Delegates - representing the Indian education department, and the Minister of Education and Training - representing the Black education departments (93). In terms of this constitutional education structure, the DNE IS a racially exclusive education controlling body. On these grounds it cannot qualify to be a member of a teacher

evaluation Gemeinschaft. A teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft represents a different kind of organizational structure, one which articulates and maintains the ideals and principles constitutive of an objective and democratic system of teacher appraisal and so builds a defence against racial exclusiveness which undermines the integrity and authority of its members. Thus, if the decision-makers of the South African teacher evaluation system occupy their positions because of race, can such a system be objective and democratic? I do not think so.

The claim I want to make is that the current South African education system is undemocratic because it does not create the necessary conditions for the establishment of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft. Why not? I have shown that the legislators are accountable only to the state, thereby precluding its accountability to other members of the organization as well. Now, I want to give some attention to the bureaucrats who have to see to the implementation of the education policies, in particular the DNE's teacher evaluation system. Who are they? In response to this question, I shall briefly give some statistics regarding the South African "professional teaching personnel of the college/school sector of education" (94), commonly known as CS educators. Of these, the vast majority are teachers at schools or lecturers at teacher and technical colleges. Then, school psychologists, educational media experts, superintendents of education, researchers, planners, etc., hold posts outside the classroom

and are normally attached to the head offices of the various education departments (95). All CS educator posts are graded according to their seniority into seven different post levels. A teacher who joins the profession will be on post level 1, a head of department at a school on post level 2, a deputy principal on post level 3, a senior deputy principal at a large secondary school on post level 4, a principal at a large school on post level 5 or 6, a superintendent or inspector of education on post level 6 and a chief education specialist at head office on post level 7 (my emphasis) (96). In addition, only 1,9 per 1000 CS educators can hold post level 7; 9 per 1000 CS educators post level 6; 25,2 per 1000 CS educators post level 5; 32 per 1000 CS educators post level 4; 52,5 per 1000 CS educators post level 3; 182,5 per 1000 CS educators post level 2, and 697,2 per 1000 CS educators post level 1 (97). If one considers that there are 423 925 CS educators who hold permanent posts in all eighteen education departments, then it follows that there are roughly 805 chief education specialists, 3 815 inspectors, 10 682 principals and 408 623 teachers. What do all these statistics have to do with teacher evaluation? According to the DNE, the persons involved in the evaluation ought to be the principal - who brings out the initial report, the inspector - who controls and moderates the report, and the head of education (i.e. the chief education specialist, because besides the Minister, HE holds the highest rank) - who takes the final decision (98). From these statistics, it follows that one principal is responsible for

38 teachers, one inspector for 107 teachers and one head of education for 507 teachers. In my view, these ratio norms suggest that the South African education bureaucracy does not have the human resources to see that its education policies, and by implication its teacher evaluation system is carried out successfully. The DNE believes it does, but I disagree. To be an evaluator is to hold a specialist job which is not merely an administrative task. The DNE imposes the specialist task of teacher evaluation on principals, who already have to see to the running of schools and to the implementation of demanding and extensive school programs. I do not imply that principals should not be doing evaluation at all, but to leave such a specialist task, whereby important decisions are taken about teachers, solely in the hands of BUSY principals, could imminently result in something like halo. Thus, I find it very strange that amongst the job descriptions of the teaching personnel who hold posts outside the classroom, nothing is mentioned about evaluators at all. Can a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft function without trained evaluators? Now the DNE does state that the participants in their evaluation system ought to receive the "necessary training" (99) but what this comprises the DNE does not spell out. Only the principal, the inspector and the head of education according to the DNE may evaluate. The principal is the one who brings out the "initial report", which means that he/she ought to have done the evaluation of a teacher. The inspector, in turn, moderates the report. But how reliable is a system where the inspector is

instructed only to control and moderate the report? This is not the same as doing the evaluation. Furthermore, the head of education has the "final decision". But, basing a final decision on a moderated report is not the same as doing the evaluation. It appears as if the senior teaching personnel ought to do a large amount of administrative work (controlling, moderating reports), instead of actually evaluating teachers. On these grounds, the South African education bureaucracy fails to comply with the standards of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft. In a Gemeinschaft, those who implement the evaluation policies are active participants who evaluate every teacher and have direct discussions with them, and not merely bureaucrats who do a lot of paper work.

What about the teachers? How does the DNE see the role of teachers in the evaluation process? The DNE claims that teachers "must be involved in the ongoing process of evaluation by way of uninterrupted communication between the schools 'management team' and ... (the teachers) ..., as well as by way of correct feedback after the assessment has been finalised" (my emphases) (100). According to the DNE, a significant issue in the process of evaluation is that teachers have to participate in an "ongoing process of evaluation". How? The DNE suggests that the senior staff and principals at schools ought to communicate uninterruptedly with the teachers. I assume that this is the way the DNE addresses the "successes and shortcomings of ... (teachers)



... with a view to training, ... development, encouragement and guidance" (101). My main concern is that such feedback is only provided "after the assessment has been finalised". Thus, the principal's evaluation report is controlled and moderated by the inspector, who in turn advances the report to the head of education for the "final decision". The final decision reaches the principal, who could use a senior staff member (post level 2, 3 or 4 teacher) to communicate the head of education's decision to the teacher. In other words, the one who takes the final decision never gets to meet the teacher at all. For HIM, the teacher is only known by a reference number. This bureaucratic arrangement is incompatible with an understanding of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft. In a Gemeinschaft, the head of education would be obliged to justify HIS "final decision" in the presence of the teacher, in accordance with the shared standards and criteria constitutive of the evaluation process and not in terms of a controlled and moderated report. In fact, to communicate a decision does not necessarily imply that a teacher participates in the evaluation process.

Furthermore, how can teachers participate in a process of teacher evaluation if the content of the South African Manual for the Evaluation of Teachers remains undisclosed and "confidential" (102)? How would teachers know what to expect from the chief evaluators? This kind of mistrust is not compatible with the notion of Gemeinschaft. What is so

confidential about this document? By not disclosing the information in the document, its users do not have to justify its content to the teaching public. The whole issue of accountability is restricted to those in whose interest it is to maintain the status quo. Thus, it is clear that the education authorities mean by communicating with its teachers that it does not have to disclose those essential elements which could make participation in the evaluation process much more meaningful. I want to conclude that in the South African teacher evaluation system teachers do not participate in any meaningful way. If two players are involved in a game of chess, both ought to understand the rules of the game, otherwise they could not be playing chess; only one would be playing chess, and the other one would probably be an onlooker or playing some game that could not be termed "chess". Likewise, if teachers and evaluators ought to participate in the evaluation process, then both parties should understand the rules and criteria constituting the evaluation procedure. In essence, teachers are excluded from knowing the rules and from participating in the South African teacher evaluation process.

Also, it is evident that the South African education bureaucracy functions on a misguided understanding of power and authority. It seems as if power and authority are equated with the dominance of males. The senior post levels which include the principals, inspectors and heads of education seem

to be reserved almost exclusively for males, despite the fact that 62% of all CS educators are women (103). Thus, it appears as if males have more power and authority to implement the education policies, which include teacher evaluation. Although it is beyond the scope of this minithesis to pursue, it is interesting to note that the evaluation system is used to indicate promotability. Now if the senior positions in levels 5, 6 and 7 are almost all occupied by males, one needs to ask whether the current rating scale favours males and so encourages a male dominated controlling body. For example, do women have the same available time as males in the afternoons for extramural activities when they have a family to see to? Or, is the criterion of control of pupils seen in terms of physical strength mainly, thus favouring male teachers? Although inequality does exist in the South African teaching personnel, it is certainly not the kind of inequality which one finds in a *Gemeinschaft*. What inequality in South Africa seems to mean is that the education system is dominated by males.

In summary, I have shown that the current teacher evaluation system cannot be objective and democratic on the basis that its legislators - those who decide on the evaluation policies - are accountable to the South African government and not to the shared ideals and principles constitutive of the teacher evaluation process. Moreover, I have pointed out that the DNE is a racially exclusive education body, and therefore cannot

be a representative of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft. Then, I have indicated that the DNE is not serious about the task of teacher evaluation, primarily because it does not concentrate on the training and development of specialist evaluators. In my view, principals cannot justifiably perform an intense and time-consuming practice such as teacher evaluation, because of their commitment to other school matters, which take up a lot of their time. Also, I discussed the manner in which teachers are excluded from the evaluation process, on the basis that they are deprived of learning ALL the rules of teacher evaluation. Finally, the South African education bureaucracy is dominated by males, a situation which brings to light a different understanding of the concepts power and authority. Therefore, the South African teacher evaluation system is neither objective nor democratic, for the reason that it is in the hands of a kind of education community which operates completely differently to a Gemeinschaft.

Thus far, I concentrated a lot on the South African education bureaucracy, because I felt it to be a real impediment in the way of establishing an objective and democratic teacher appraisal system. I shall now attempt to say more about the current rating scale itself, and why it cannot lay claim to be objective and democratic.

#### 4.2 IS THE CURRENT RATING SCALE ROOTED IN COMMON, SHARED, INTERSUBJECTIVE STANDARDS OF TEACHER EVALUATION?

In the previous section, I have pointed out the difficulty in referring to the South African education bureaucracy as a Gemeinschaft. I claim that one cannot speak of a teacher evaluation Gemeinschaft in South Africa. I thus need to ask where the current rating scale comes from? I want to develop the claim that the current rating scale did not evolve from common, shared, intersubjective evaluation practices pursued by the South African teaching personnel.

Firstly, the DNE "recommended" that teachers ought to be evaluated in accordance with ITS rating scale (104). My understanding of a recommendation, is that something worthwhile is presented, according to which its recipients could act if they choose to. In other words, inherent in the DNE's recommendation is an understanding that ITS rating scale could best perform the task of teacher evaluation and furthermore, that it OUGHT to be implemented (at very least the 19 main criteria). The point I am raising is that the current rating scale appears to be the property of the DNE and imposed on, rather than recommended to, all the different education departments. If this is so, then the current rating scale is not objective. Objectivity in terms of intersubjectivity means that the rating scale is not unilaterally imposed, but that it is rooted in the common and

shared efforts of an evaluation community. In South Africa, there is no evaluation community, but rather a DNE which makes recommendations, because of a rating scale it owns.

Secondly, the current rating scale can only claim to be objective if it is located within CHANGING social and historical contexts. There is little evidence that this is the case with the current rating scale. For the past decade, the DNE recommended the same rating scale, with little if any changes to its formulation of the main criteria. What this means is that the current rating scale remains unchanged, despite significant developments as far as education in South Africa is concerned. One of the significant developments is in unequal teacher-pupil ratios within the different departments. If one considers that the teacher is the most significant figure in the evaluation process, and the fact that the teacher-pupil ratio in South Africa is currently standing at 1:17,6 - for Whites, 1:21,6 - for Indians, 1:23,5 - for Coloureds, and 1:38,4 - for Blacks in comparison with countries like Japan (1:26), Netherlands (1:20), Australia (1:16), France (1:16), Portugal (1:13), Norway (1:13), and Italy (1:11) (105), then one can imagine the enormous responsibility which rests on the teacher's shoulders, in particular the Black teachers. What is so important about the pupil-teacher ratio regarding teacher evaluation? I have mentioned in chapter 1 that the current rating scale, according to the DNE, is aimed at measuring the "efficiency"

of teachers. For the DNE, "the relative number of successful pupils (those pupils who are eventually awarded Senior Certificates) gives an indication of the efficiency of an education system" (106). Thus, the teachers who serve the education system are said to be "efficient" if they produce "successful pupils". Consequently, what the current rating does is to determine how many "successful pupils" a teacher can produce. What concerns me is the fact that the same rating scale has been used for assessing a Black teacher, responsible for almost 38 pupils and a White teacher, responsible for approximately 18 pupils. In fact, to evaluate a teacher with a class of 38 pupils, is significantly different from evaluating one with a class of 18 pupils. In this sense, the current rating scale becomes an invalid instrument, because it has failed to adapt to changing conditions at different schools. Moreover, the current rating scale is a biased instrument in that it advantages the teacher with smaller classes (predominantly White teachers) and disadvantages those with large numbers in their classes (mainly Black teachers). Again, bearing in mind that the current rating scale indicates promotability, it becomes an instrument which continues to disadvantage Blacks and which maintains and strengthens the status quo of having a White (and male) dominated top structure. My contention is that the current rating scale is not rooted in changing historical and social conditions and this affects the viability and acceptability of such an evaluation instrument.

Thirdly, it should be mentioned that the standards and criteria of the current rating scale have not been developed and supported by the teachers themselves. If this was so, then all teaching personnel should have done so on the basis of common and shared practices. I have already mentioned that there are eighteen different education departments. These departments use "about 1 400 core syllabuses" (107). The fact that an objective teacher evaluation system requires that the standards and criteria constitutive of the system should be developed out of the common, shared practices of its teacher evaluation community, brings to light that the current rating scale is not objective. Besides the fact that no teacher evaluation community in South Africa exists, the teaching personnel in eighteen education departments can have very little in common, and can share very little when the syllabuses they use are vastly different.

In summary, the current rating scale is not objective, neither democratic on the basis that the evaluation instrument appears to be the top-down imposition by the DNE. Furthermore, the rating scale does not adapt itself to the changing conditions in schools, in particular the pupil-teacher ratio in Black schools. It ignores the very conditions that directly influence teaching practices. Finally, the teaching personnel in South Africa do not have common, shared interests, as a result of the many syllabuses used by the eighteen separate



education departments. In essence, the current rating scale cannot be objective and democratic for it is neither intersubjective nor does it create or promote the conditions in which good teaching qualities can develop freely and fully. It is rather restrictive and inappropriate, encouraging window-dressing and often dishonest practices.

I shall now look at the content of the rating scale itself, in particular the manner in which it has been developed and implemented.

#### 4.3 ARE THE MAIN CRITERIA OBJECTIVE AND DEMOCRATIC?

In chapter 2, I have briefly dealt with several aspects of the current rating scale. I have shown that the main criteria could be seen by the DNE as universal criteria, thus giving it a neutral stance. Then, I discussed what efficiency could mean for the DNE, by referring to the notions of "measurable achievements" and "scores". I have briefly dealt with the notion of personality, and what the DNE could mean by this. What I intend doing now, is to look at the main criteria in a systematic way, and ask whether they could be objective and democratic in terms of the way in which I have developed these two notions. I shall only be looking at what I regard as the most problematic issues which constitute the main criteria, and argue why no claim can be made to the kind of objectivity and democracy accentuated throughout this minithesis.

(1) The criterion which involves planning and preparation suggests that the evaluator should look at the lesson preparation book and the record book of a teacher, which contains the schemes of work to be taught. My main criticism is that these books could be done very neatly by a teacher, which might be a lot of window-dressing to impress the evaluator. The assessment of such documents, which could be manipulated by a teacher merely for the sake of having some official documentation available, would contribute very little towards making the current rating scale objective and democratic. Also, systematic planning of lessons is important and possible provided that there is systematic schooling. However, since 1976 there has been little systematic schooling in DET schools which makes systematic planning and working through of the syllabus very difficult. To evaluate a preparation book of a teacher whose school has been in on-off boycott action seems incongruous with the conditions under which the teaching takes place. Once again, most DET teachers (mainly Black) would be disadvantaged by the current rating scale. In fact, this criterion like most of the other main criteria seem to assume that normal schooling takes place and therefore disadvantages those teachers who have to cope with schooling that does not proceed normally.

(2) The criterion which deals with a teacher's presentation of a lesson, measures the ability of a teacher to create and

retain student's confidence. What this means, is that an evaluator should focus his/her attention on pupils and a teacher simultaneously. This is not impossible, but it is certainly not practical when one takes into account that, say in a black school that the eyes of an evaluator ought to be focussed on 38 pupils during a single lesson of thirty five minutes in duration. If not so, is the evaluator going to look at one or two pupils who according to him/her show enough confidence in the classroom in order to evaluate a teacher? For example, an evaluator looks at a pupil who for some reason or other did not have a proper breakfast, neither did he/she bring any sandwiches to school. The pupil is hungry and finds it difficult to concentrate in the classroom. In the evaluator's eyes such a pupil would not be concentrating because the teacher is incapable of retaining the pupil's attention. According to this criterion it seems as if the evaluator does not take into account the socio-economic factors such as extreme poverty which directly influence teaching/learning practices. How can there be "normal" schooling (which the current rating scale presupposes) when many of the townships are torn apart by violence and poverty.

(3) The criterion which deals with a teacher's maintenance of discipline focuses on how pupils ought to behave, and how a teacher should control his/her pupils to create an "atmosphere in the classroom"? However, a noisy class need not necessarily be an undisciplined class. Therefore, if a class is noisy, it

does not necessarily mean that the teacher is incompetent. For example, amongst the Calvinist Afrikaner community children are taught that it is rude to question your elders/teachers. These children listening quietly are not necessarily then an indication that (1) the teacher is competent or (2) that the pupils have understood anything. Also, there are differences between maintaining a class of 18 pupils (White teachers mainly) and one of 38 pupils. Furthermore, there are differences in maintaining discipline in a class where there is a constant threat of boycott, gangsterism, police action, etc. in DET schools, and where schooling proceeds systematically as in White schools. Once again, it appears as if this criterion advantages or promotes mainly White teachers.

(4) The criterion which deals with a teacher's ability to keep his/her classroom neat and attractive poses serious problems for teachers in township DET schools. This criterion does not take into account the horrendous physical conditions of classrooms in DET schools such as no windows in the classroom, two to three pupils sharing a desk, no or few books available, overcrowding, etc., which not only constrain a teacher from keeping his/her classroom "attractive", but also influence the learning and teaching practices.

(5) Ironically, there is a criterion which assesses the knowledge and skills of a teacher in subject matter,

syllabuses, circulars, manuals, and the broad education policy. What kind of manual knowledge ought a teacher to have if the Evaluation Manual for Teachers is hidden from them? This, of course, is not the only manual. However, teachers should have access to something which affects them directly. Furthermore, this criterion purports to measure the subject knowledge of a teacher. If one takes into account that the principal is the chief evaluator, is he/she in a position to assess all teachers on his/her staff? It seems unlikely that a principal who has been trained as a History teacher, and taught the subject for most of his/her career would be competent enough to assess the subject knowledge say of a senior Mathematics and Science teacher, especially if Mathematics and Science are beyond him/her? Furthermore, considering the statistics of un- or underqualified teachers, one sees that the majority of these teachers are in Department of Education and Training (DET) schools. Once again, the current rating scale favours those who have had adequate training in subject knowledge and disadvantages the already disadvantaged.

(6) The criterion which measures a teacher's ability to use official languages in accordance with pupil's faculty of comprehension and correct pronunciation explicitly concentrates on a teacher's use of national dialects, for example Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. The emphasis should not be on pronunciation, but rather the ability of teachers to

express themselves in clear language and valid arguments. In fact, this language usage expected by the DNE, poses problems for many Black teachers who might have to teach in English, which often is their second or even third language. Their pronunciation of words of the English language might not impress the evaluator. These teachers are then disadvantaged because they are not adhering to the the standards of language usage. Furthermore, in some rural schools a dialect is spoken. This makes this criterion irrelevant because the evaluator has to assess a teacher's usage of "official" languages.

(7) The criteria which involve a teacher's promotion of pride amongst pupils, colleagues and especially the community, calling for a respect for the values and customs of the community, is cause for great concern. It is, first of all, unclear which community the DNE means. I think, the DNE uses the concept community as referring to the people staying in close proximity to the school. There are a multiple of different communities in South Africa. The implications of these criteria could be that separate and different belief systems and pride of them are encouraged at school level. Although one would not necessarily argue for a conformist, uniform approach, to encourage separatism in an apartheid country like South Africa would seem to entrench the existing divisions even further. Thus, if all these communities have different values and customs, and therefore different social practices, it would be difficult to make sense of shared,

intersubjective standards of social practices.

(8) There is a criterion which measures the ability of a teacher to organize. My question is whether organizing a school bazaar warrants a measurement. In my view, organizing outside the classroom is not something which necessarily makes one a better teacher - organizing inside the classroom, yes. Furthermore, one can ask the question what about a teacher who organizes student action? In the South African context such a teacher will not be rated highly by the official evaluators.

(9) The criterion measuring the professional pride displayed by a teacher in promoting education's image is highly problematic, especially because of the kind of image South African education has. Does the DNE expect teachers to promote separate education? This criterion implicitly tests the teacher's support of the status quo. There is no space for questioning the very image of education in South Africa itself, only space for one's support of it (or lack thereof). It is highly problematic for an image of education to be promoted which does not invoke the self-understandings of the majority of people in South Africa. Moreover, nowhere is it spelt out how an evaluator determines that a teacher promotes an education's image.

(10) The criterion which involves a teacher's professional

conduct towards pupils, colleagues and authorities, in the form of being loyal to them raises serious problems. Should a teacher be loyal to the authorities, or to the standards constitutive of the education process? Very often, as is the case in South Africa, these two do not coincide. What kind of loyalty does the DNE expect? For example, in DET schools there are enormous divisions between pupils and authorities. If a teacher sides with the pupils, he/she faces retrenchment or transference to another school, and even suspension which means that he/she loses out on salary. On the other hand, teachers who side with the authorities become alienated by the pupils and even the community. In Kwazulu, principals are faced with death threats if they side with the authorities. This means that "loyalty" to the education departments could have serious implications for South African teachers.

(11) The criterion which involves the measurement of a teacher's professional involvement with teacher associations, is also contentious. For example, if one considers that the politicized and progressive South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU) is not recognized by the DNE, it becomes problematic which teacher organizations a teacher should be affiliated to. It seems to imply that if a teacher is not a member of a teacher's association, or not a member of an officially recognized association (normally a non-radical, non-questioning one) he/she is "penalised".



In summary, the main criteria of the current rating scale are in stark contradiction with the notions of objectivity and democracy. In fact, these criteria entrench division and inequality, i.e. they seem to advantage White teachers and are therefore not intersubjectively developed and supported. Nor do these criteria create the conditions which encourage or promote the full and free development of good teaching qualities as accepted by the teaching Gemeinschaft. There is in fact little evidence of a teaching Gemeinschaft in South Africa. Furthermore, I am not saying that the main criteria do not include aspects which could measure teachers' practices in the classroom, but a significant percentage of the main criteria is about what teachers do outside the classroom. It is also evident that the DNE concentrates overwhelmingly on the professional pride of teachers as well as promoting the image of education in South Africa. These issues are highly problematic, because it appears as if the DNE wants to coerce its teaching personnel to accept those very standards which run contrary to the notions of intersubjectivity and a democratic Gemeinschaft.

I have shown why the current rating scale cannot be considered objective and democratic. However, the question arises whether a different evaluation scale could be objective and democratic in the South African context. Bearing in mind that I argued that objectivity and democracy are linked to intersubjectivity and Gemeinschaft, I want to contend that at this stage there

can be no objective and democratic teacher evaluation system, for the following reasons: With its eighteen separate departments and 1400 different core syllabuses there is no South African Gemeinschaft. Intersubjectivity is not something that is imposed, but something that grows out of interaction and common understandings. This means that it takes time to evolve, a process that the South African education system is only starting to embark upon. There is still a long way to go before a shared framework has developed and before conditions have been created which encourage, rather than hinder, teachers' growth. Only when these have had a chance to be developed, is there a possibility of a teacher evaluation system in South Africa being objective and democratic, rooted in the notion of intersubjectivity. This rather pessimistic view does not, however, mean that we as participants in the education process must sit back and wait until a framework and conditions have been established. It is by becoming involved now that the very foundation of a Gemeinschaft is laid.

Finally, a comment on the current educational changes in the country and how it could affect teacher evaluation. In 1990, the Minister of National Education announced the development of an Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) for education in South Africa. This strategy was headed by the Ministers of the various education departments and carried out by the Committee of Heads of Education (CHED), who comprise people appointed by the various Ministers. Amongst the responsibilities assigned

to these educationists were to come up with proposals for a new education dispensation for South Africa. In June 1991, the CHED came up with a discussion document, which entails a large variety of recommendations on the following issues:

1. The educational model.
2. Linkage between formal and non-formal education.
3. Distance education.
4. A more rational allocation of educational programmes amongst the various institutions in post secondary education.
5. The large number of instructional programmes at universities and technikons.
6. Educational programmes for teacher training.
7. The school and technical college curriculum.
8. South African Certification Council (SAFCERT) and the Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC).
9. Standards at universities in South Africa.
10. Admission requirements for university and technikon study.
11. Structural changes regarding universities, technikons and technical colleges.
12. Pre-primary education.
13. Use of education technology as a form of teaching support.
14. Projected manpower needs.
15. Remuneration of educators.

16. Registration of educators.
17. Full funding of the subsidy formula for universities.
18. Additional models for providing school education and greater management autonomy for educational institutions.
19. High cost of university and technikon study to students.
20. Norms and standards for the financing of public ordinary school education, special school education, technical college education, and teacher training.
21. Resources for teacher training.
22. Cost effective classrooms and school buildings (108).

Noticeably absent from this document is a discussion of teacher evaluation, which suggests that the DNE does not consider teacher evaluation as seriously as it ought to. By implication, the current rating scale would remain the evaluation instrument to be used by evaluators. Bearing in mind that the rating scale is the indicator for promotability and "achievement recognition", the significant role of the current evaluation system becomes obvious. Moreover, it would be naive to think that teacher effectiveness can be improved without a systematic, well-articulated form of teacher evaluation (109). I hold that an objective, democratically structured teacher evaluation system could strengthen the practices of teachers in the classroom. It would need to be an evaluation system whose rules are understood and accepted by the members of the teaching Gemeinschaft. Mere recommendations

for a South African teacher evaluation system are not sufficient, as such a system of teacher evaluation ought to be entrenched in the common, shared intersubjective practices of the South African teaching personnel. It is difficult to conceive of an objective and democratic evaluation system being used at this stage, but it needs to evolve out of a more unified South African teaching Gemeinschaft in a changing South Africa.

## NOTES

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