Assessment as an "emotional practice"

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> ABSTRACT: The intention of this article is to illustrate how assessment is an "emotional practice" (Hargreaves, 1998) for teachers and how paying attention to the emotions involved can provide useful information about assessment practices to teachers, teacher-educators and policy-reformers. Through presenting a review of research literature it makes three main points. Firstly, assessment decisions are not "neutral" but involve teachers' emotions, which are interwoven with their beliefs. Secondly, standardised assessment generates intensely negative emotions in teachers which limit their effectiveness, while accountability practices can evoke undesirable emotions which undermine the purposes of schooling. Thirdly, formative assessment and accountability through standardised assessment are governed by conflicting emotional rules, which inevitably generate confusion in practice. It concludes by calling for further research so as to better understand the multiple ways in which assessment is an "emotional practice".

> KEYWORDS: Assessment, teacher emotions, assessment emotions, emotional rules, emotional labour, emotions in education

TEACHERS' EMOTIONS TOWARDS ASSESSMENT

The contradiction of negative emotions and positive approval

As a teacher educator, I have become aware of my own, my colleagues' and my teacher-students' strong emotions of anxiety, irritation and even despair during times of assessment, either as the person being assessed or as the assessor. These emotions are strongly felt, but given expression only in the private sphere and remain confined to offices, corridors, telephones and homes. When assessment reaches the public sphere in policy forums, decision-making meetings, classrooms, or in the research literature on assessment, emotions around assessment are seldom mentioned, and hardly ever taken seriously or explored. In the lives of the people involved, assessment appears to be a highly emotional experience, whereas at public and policy levels of educational interactions, it is treated as an emotionless, objective reality.

Internationally, and in South Africa, assessment is moving to centre stage in the education system. There are many reasons why assessment is a pivotal aspect of education. Firstly, assessment is a key institutional structure in the struggle for increased social justice (Gipps, 1998; Madaus, 1997; Shohamy, 2004). It acts as a gatekeeper that enables or denies access to higher education, work, increased income/social status. Secondly, assessment is a leverage point used by education policy-makers to generate educational reform. They rely on the backwash effect, assuming that externally-set examinations which use different types of questions or approaches to displaying knowledge will push teachers into changing their

pedagogy and teaching more "effectively" (Fuhrman, 1999; Stecher & Barron, 1999). Thirdly, through externally-set, standardised testing, schools are held accountable for educational quality (Winch & Gingel, 1999). The World Bank argues that the quality of education, as recognised through the "systematic measurement of learning achievement" is a key long-term factor in national economic growth (Hanushek & Wössmann, 2007, p. vii). In addition, through international standardised tests (for example, TIMSS, SACMEC, PISA, PIRLS), assessment accords status to countries through the ranking of these test results. Assessment is a powerful component of the education system, because it shapes the future of people, bureaucracies and countries.

According to Nussbaum's (2001) theory of emotion, any component that is so important to individuals, institutional systems and society will of necessity evoke strong emotions. Nussbaum defines emotions as

> appraisals or value judgements [which are] our ways of registering how things are with respect to the external (i.e. uncontrolled) items that we view as salient for our well-being…or flourishing (p. 4).

Emotions are thus the expression of an instant, often subconscious, appraisal of any object, (situation, person, event, idea, and so on) that is not under the person's control yet important to their sense of well-being. Emotions provide information about our relationship with the situation that evokes the emotion. Intense emotions indicate that the situation is of high importance, while the quality of the emotion, be it pleasurable or distressing, indicates the nature of the relationship with what is valued. When emotions are pleasurable, the relationship with whatever we have the feelings towards is judged to be beneficial, but not so when the emotions are uncomfortable.

The contradiction that led me to engage with the research discussed in this article was that, at an anecdotal level, most of the emotions expressed by teacher educators and teachers about assessment were intense and negative, thus indicating that assessment was being inwardly appraised as not conducive to well-being. But externally, in the world of educational discourse, the same people supported assessment as a lever for educational quality and personal advancement. For example, I once asked a small group of teachers attending an in-service teacher education programme to write and talk about their attitudes to assessment[1]. They unanimously disliked being assessed because "it gives power to someone else to judge my life from a high throne", and several had negative memories of being assessed, "when I did not trust the examiner and disagreed with the interpretation of outcomes". As teachers, they resented having "this large amount of assessment forms and papers to fill in" and worried about "assessing all learners well", experiencing a sense of failure when their students failed. But, equally unanimously, they said that assessment was necessary and should stay a part of school life. They reflected that assessment motivated them and their students into higher achievements than they would have managed without it. These responses left me wondering how an "item" that is emotionally appraised as not fostering our "flourishing" (Nussbaum, 2001) can simultaneously be accepted as a beneficial component of education policy?

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[1] Voluntary workshop with in-service teachers, 22 January 2005.

In this article I use a meta-analysis of research into the relationships between teachers' emotions and assessment practices to illustrate two insights. Firstly, I illustrate that assessment is an "emotional practice" (Hargreaves, 1998) for teachers. Teachers have intense emotions about assessment, and these emotions colour their planning for and practice of assessment. Secondly, I illustrate some insights that can be gained by exploring the nature of teachers' emotions in response to assessment, as teachers' emotions are an indicator of how they judge assessment to affect their (and their students') "flourishing". When teachers feel irritated and despairing during times of assessment, their emotions tell a very different story compared to when they are excited and satisfied. Investigating the emotions that teachers have in relation to different aspects of assessment can open up their beliefs and understandings of assessment practice in new ways.

"Teachers need to feel right to do their job"

Hargreaves (1998, 2000, 2001a, 2001b) presents convincing evidence that "teaching is an emotional practice" which "activates, colours and expresses" (1998, p. 838) the feelings of teachers and those with whom they work. He describes how emotions shape teachers' relationships with students, school structures, pedagogy, curriculum planning, parents, colleagues and educational change/reform. He goes on to argue that "teachers' emotions are inextricably bound up with the basic purposes of schooling" (1998, p. 841) because emotions are evoked by what is important. In the case of teachers, what is important is often linked to their educational ideals and thus their professional identity. In his study of teachers' professional biographies, Kelchtermans (2005) found that "emotions reflect the fact that deeply held beliefs on good education are part of teachers' self-understanding" (p. 995).

Other research shows that positive emotions are a crucial factor in teachers' effectiveness. Palmer (1993) talks about the "fear of feelings – and especially the feeling of fear" (p. 84) as a major barrier to learning. He calls for teachers who are "not afraid of feelings" (p. 84) to bring emotions into the classroom. He argues that attention to feelings does not detract from cognitive understanding. On the contrary, it is precisely by creating a space for feelings that the students' "capacity for tough-mindedness grows" (p. 87). A longitudinal research study conducted by Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts and Morrison (2008) shows emotions to be a statistically significant factor in learning. The "emotional quality of the classroom setting – the warmth of adult-child interactions, as well as the adults' skill in detecting and responding to individual children's needs – was a consistent predictor of both reading and maths skill growth" (p. 393). Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kingston and Qing (2007) found that "to be successful, teachers themselves must be passionately motivated and committed" (p. 233), and that "teachers' well-being and positive professional identity are fundamental to their capacities to become and remain effective" (p. 237). Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007) argue convincingly that the quality of teachers is dependent on their sense of purpose and motivation (p. 105), their knowledge of what they are teaching, and on the confidence they have in their own competence (p. 107). Kwo & Intrator (2004) argue that teacher education should pay attention to the "dynamic interplay between the inner lives of spirit, self-knowledge and emotional presence and the outer lives of work in schools" (p. 283) so that teachers can uncover their power to cope with new challenges and meaningful teaching.

The personal states of being that teachers need in order to teach well – their well-being, motivation, passion, commitment, sense of competent self and resilience – are all grounded in their emotional state. Maintaining commitment and resilience over time thus requires a predominantly positive emotional state. When teachers experience negative emotions, such as frustration, anger or hopelessness over a period of time, their motivation and commitment fades, which diminishes their effectiveness. As noted by Jeffrey & Woods (1996), "teachers need to feel right in order to do their job" (p. 325).

With regard to assessment, some research indicates how teachers' emotions during assessment processes are "difficult" (Stough & Emmer, 1998) and even "demoralising" (Smith, 1991). These distressing emotions have the potential to generate a negative emotional climate towards teachers' roles as assessors, or even teaching as a whole.

Assessment is key to teachers' sense of professional purpose and self

MacIntyre's (1981) conception of the "external" and "internal" "goods of a practice" (p. 175) illuminates the structural position of assessment in relation to schooling[2], and thus to a teachers' sense of professional self. "External goods" are the social and financial rewards provided by the institutions responsible for maintaining the practice. "Internal goods" are the skills and knowledge of a practice, which can only be gained through participation in the activities that make up the practice. In relation to the external and internal goods of schooling, assessment operates as a dispenser of both the outer and the inner rewards. For example, the external goods of schooling are provided by positive assessment results, which enable the status and potential financial rewards of passing the gateways into higher levels of learning and beyond. The internal goods are less visible. For students, they consist of the learning that is taken into adult life. For teachers, the internal goods of assessment are the pride and pleasure of observing students' progress in understanding. Assessment thus connects the inner satisfaction that gives meaning to a teacher's professional purpose with the outer world of success.

Yet there is a tension for teachers between the internal and external goods of assessment. The internal goods are related to student progress and are usually noticed during momentary interactions or insights in relation to where the student comes from, that is, when noticing ipsative, or self-referenced growth. The external goods are made permanently visible in the form of marks. Marks are by their nature comparative, be they norm or criterion-referenced. As soon as students' knowledge and skills are compared against public norms or criteria, it is inevitable that many students, particularly those from less advantaged, socio-economic backgrounds, are assessed as mediocre or failures. Thus, when assessment becomes public, it no longer shows progress for all, but instead highlights the lack of achievement for many. In this way, the reality that many students do not achieve the external goods can overshadow the teacher's sense of the internal goods of assessment. Then pride and pleasure at progress become overshadowed by the disappointment and frustration of failure.

This tension intensifies when accountability pressures are added to the mix, that is, when teachers are held responsible for student results and blamed for student failure. Being

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[2] Thank you to Lynne Slonimsky for this insight.

accountable for assessment results makes public a vulnerability that lies at the heart of teachers' work. Kelchtermans (1996) finds vulnerability intrinsic to being a teacher because it arises in relation to the structures of the job: the demands of education administration and policy, the professional relationships with other adults, and most importantly, the limits of the effectiveness of their work with learners. Because teaching activities substantially influence students' learning outcomes, teachers feel responsible for their students' successes and failures. When students fail despite teachers' best efforts, such failure can generate feelings of disappointment, powerlessness and helplessness for teachers. Kelchtermans noted that, "In their pupils' failures, these teachers felt they were falling short themselves" (1996, p. 309). Conversely, when students succeed, teachers feel joy and pride. It is as if students' outcomes are a mirror in which teachers see themselves and their work reflected.

Yet it is inevitable that learners don't learn everything presented by the teacher or mandated by the curriculum, so teachers easily feel vulnerable and defensive towards other adults who hold them accountable. This vulnerability has its roots in the "complex moral decisions" (Kelchtermans, 1996, p. 311) teachers must make with regard to learners, pedagogy and curriculum, followed by the public consequences of these decisions, as made visible in assessment results.

> The basic structure of vulnerability is always one of feeling that one's professional identity and moral integrity, as part of being "a proper teacher", are questioned and that valued workplace conditions are thereby threatened or lost (p. 311).

Caught in this structural vulnerability, teachers experience anxiety and guilt. Hargreaves (1994) describes how the anxiety of appearing incompetent to themselves and their colleagues is generated by the "persona of perfectionism" (p. 149) expected of teachers. He quotes a teacher as saying,

> There is fear of not measuring up, of having somebody think that they're not doing a good job. Teachers are the hardest professionals on themselves. We do not want anybody in the classroom watching us teach because we might not be doing something right….We are very insecure as a profession (1994, p. 150).

This constant judging of self as not having done or achieved enough, coupled with the increased demands of accountability measures, lays the ground for "powerful guilt traps" (p. 157) that teachers can fall into. Living with guilt for too long can extinguish commitment to ideals of professionalism and care, and lead to cynicism, exhaustion and burn-out.

RESEARCH INTO TEACHERS' EMOTIONS TOWARDS ASSESSMENT

Finding the literature

Internationally, there is a large, established literature on assessment. Part of that literature focuses on the need for teachers to change their assessment practices so as to promote student learning by engaging in more "constructivist" approaches (for example, Shepard, 2000; Gipps, 1998; Black *et al.,* 2003; Clarke, 2005; Stiggins 2004). This literature occasionally hints at, but does not explore, teachers' emotions in relation to assessment in general, or to

the changes in practice required by a more constructivist, formative assessment approach in particular.

There is also a burgeoning literature on teachers' emotions (for example, Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000, 2001; Zembylas, 2005; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Journal articles justifying teachers' emotions as a focus of research appeared in the mid-1990s and their number is increasing exponentially. These research studies are concerned with teachers' emotions in relation to a range of educational issues, such as educational reform, social and power relations within the school, classroom practice, educational ideals, and people, such as students, colleagues, managers. Sutton & Wheatley (2003) present a literature review of teacher emotions in which they document findings of teachers' positive and negative emotions. Positive emotions discussed most often are the "love and caring or affection" (2003, p. 332) teachers feel for their students, their satisfaction and pleasure when children make progress, their pride when they get everything done, their desire to feel supported by colleagues and parents, and their excitement when teaching well (p. 333). Negative emotions like anger or frustrations are felt in relation to students' misbehaviour, uncooperative colleagues, and parents who are perceived as uncaring or irresponsible. Anxiety arises in relation to "the uncertainty of determining whether they are doing a good job" (2003, p. 334), helplessness and guilt come from the limits to their efficacy, and sadness is felt about the home lives of some of their students.

The field of teacher emotions is still wide open for new research. In an article outlining present and future research agendas into emotions in science education, Zembylas suggests that the impact of testing on students and teachers is worthy of exploration:

> Because standardised testing – especially in science and mathematics – has become a central focus of many science curricula in the United States, it is important to understand how such an emphasis influences science teaching and learning emotionally (2005a, p. 128).

I have found little evidence of this idea being taken up; the fields of teachers' emotions and assessment are not yet talking to each other. There is research into the emotions, in particular the test anxiety, of students (Zeidner, 2007) but practically nothing on the emotions of the assessors. As yet there is little understanding of how assessment, as an aspect of teaching, is also an emotional practice. Questions around which emotions teachers experience in relation to assessment, or how emotions shape teachers' decisions regarding what forms of assessment practice to enact, are yet to be extensively investigated.

Nevertheless, the few articles that I did find were very illuminating. Some looked at the internal goods of assessment, by investigating emotions in relation to learning and progress. Two research studies deal directly with teachers' emotions and assessment: Stough and Emmer (1998) investigated teachers' emotions during an assessment event, while Reyna and Weiner (2001) analysed teachers' attitudes of judgement toward their students when engaged in assessment, showing how emotions mediate judgements. I did not find any studies that explored teachers' emotions towards marking, perhaps because the emotions are so uncomfortable that no teacher wants to dwell on them once the job is done. Other research studies explored emotions related to the external goods of the practice, by illustrating teachers' emotion responses to standardised assessment used for accountability purposes (Smith, 1991; Falk & Drayton, 2004; Hargreaves, 2004). The most intense emotions were

reserved for accountability measures that assess teachers' work directly, like school evaluations or performance appraisals (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Mahony *et al.,* 2004; Kornfeld *et al.,* 2007).

Because there are so few studies investigating teachers' emotions in relation to assessment, which do not refer to each other, this literature review cannot show general trends. Instead, I want to explore each study in detail, drawing out the implications and making links between the articles. By slowly piecing together a mosaic, I hope that the completed picture will illustrate the importance and complexity of engaging in research into teachers' emotions regarding assessment.

Teachers' emotions are at play during the assessment process

Reyna and Weiner (2001) focused on teachers' emotions about student achievement by investigating the motivations of teachers responding to scenarios of students who had poor assessment results. They found that teachers weighed up whether to emphasise "retributive" or "utilitarian goals" in their response to assessment results (p. 309). Retributive goals are oriented towards retaliation for a past wrong, while utilitarian goals are aimed at altering the future behaviour of the student (p. 309). While some teachers used retributive motives, on the whole they were more inclined towards utilitarian goals. Compared with a sample of college students who responded to the same scenarios, teachers chose utilitarian goals noticeably more often (pp. 312, 316). Motivations for this choice were multi-layered and depended on which characteristics the teachers "attributed" (p. 309) to the students. Teachers made two kinds of "attributions" with regards to the cause of the failure: whether or not the failure was controllable by the student, and whether or not the cause was permanent. Regarding responsibility: when the student was seen as responsible for the failure, teachers' anger was awakened and retribution became more prominent; when a student performed badly because of unfortunate circumstances, teachers responded with sympathy and chose utilitarian means to respond. Regarding permanence: when the cause was seen as transitory and thus teacher intervention could make a difference, teachers' responses were generally utilitarian (p. 315). Thus teachers responded sympathetically to scenarios of students failing for transitory reasons beyond their control, tolerated students failing for permanent reasons beyond their control, wavered between irritability and sympathy with students who were responsible for failing temporarily, and had retribution more often in mind with students who were responsible for failing permanently, that is, lazy students (p. 316). This negative response to lazy students was echoed in another study. Biddle and Goudas (1997) investigated teachers' preferences for different grading criteria and found that physical education teachers preferred using criteria related to "pupil progress and effort" because "effort is virtuous" (p. 350). Both studies show how student failure evokes a lack of sympathy in teachers when effort is deemed to be absent.

It is interesting to reflect on Reyna and Weiner's (2001) finding that teachers respond with anger and are tempted by the desire for retribution when students fail for reasons they could have controlled. If it were clear that students are solely to blame for the failure, then why should teachers feel angry? Aristotle defines anger as "a distressed desire for conspicuous vengeance in return for a conspicuous and unjustifiable contempt of one's person or friends" (Solomon, 2003, p. 6). Why would teachers feel that by failing, students have treated them

with contempt? Perhaps because students have not responded to all the effort that teachers put in? Kelchtermans' claim that teachers experience students' results as reflecting on their own competence could be at play. If teachers identify with students' failures, then their anger at insufficient effort could be directed partially at themselves. Yet anger at oneself is very disconcerting and it becomes tempting to project it. So perhaps, when teachers vociferously blame the students' laziness for the failure, they do so because they don't want to blame themselves? Perhaps their anger at students' failure also covers up their sense of powerless at their own failure to get students to learn? This would fit with Reyna and Weiner's (2001) other finding, namely, that teachers' impulses for utilitarian solutions are stronger when the cause of the failure is not stable and teachers feel they can intervene successfully. Teachers don't want their students to fail, and might well resort to retributive punishment from a place of powerlessness within themselves.

Reyna and Weiner did not probe the complexities of the teachers' emotions during assessment, but their findings prompted me to investigate my own. I started paying attention to the flow of my emotions during assessment activities. Recently I was asked to be the external respondent at the oral presentation of a Masters proposal. Within three pages of reading I was confronted by difficult emotions. Reading the proposal was painful. It felt as if the proposal were deliberately hurting me. I hated it. I was angry at the level of confusion and irritated with the effort I had to make so as to make sense of it. I became anxious about how to tell the student that the work was not good enough, in a way that is truthful yet not devastating. I expressed my emotional turmoil by writing curt comments all over the margins. I then tried to calm down by laying it aside for a few days. When I picked the proposal up again, the irritation had softened into concern – what exactly was the context of the presentation? How high were the stakes? If I exposed the confusion, would it end the student's career? And could I do that from my "high throne" of an outsider's perspective? And wouldn't I be insulting the supervisor (my colleague) if I could find so little to redeem the student's work? And what if my judgement were inaccurate? I ended up anxious and confused, having turned the process of judgement about the student's abilities into a process of judgement about my assessor abilities. It took a conversation with the supervisor confirming that the oral presentation was only a step in the process, not the final evaluation, which gave me the courage to set down and justify my judgement.

From these studies and my self-reflection, it is interesting to note how doing assessment involves relationship, even when the assessor does not know the person being assessed; how the assessor requires (or attributes) an understanding of the student's context; how it becomes a process whereby the assessor too is being assessed, albeit by different measures; and how much emotional turmoil is involved in doing the supposedly objective work of assessment.[3]

Formative assessment is more emotionally demanding than summative

A valuable perspective on teachers' emotional responses to assessment comes from Stough and Emmer (1998), who investigated higher education teachers' beliefs and emotions with regard to giving students feedback after a test. They concluded that "teachers' emotions

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[3] Obviously this applies less to forms of assessment that attempt to eliminate the judgement of the assessor, like multiple-choice or one-word answer formats.

concerning feedback sessions was an important factor in both instructional planning and interactive decision making" (p. 360).

Teachers dreaded the test feedback sessions; they experienced students as volatile and attacking and warned new teachers to "watch out – students grow teeth" (p. 349). This applied not only to students who had not done well in the test, but particularly to high-achieving students who received a lower mark than expected, who during class time were often their favourite students. Thus, although teachers believed that "test-feedback sessions could be a learning experience for their students", their comments more often reflected "self-focused, affective concerns rather than student achievement or learning concerns" (p. 357). Stough and Emmer (1998) found that teachers' goals were both educational – to improve students' learning, to involve students actively in the feedback process, and emotion-based – to avoid confrontations with students (pp. 351-2). Their beliefs about the value of feedback and the appropriateness (or not) of the exam, as well as their expectations of students' negative reactions and their beliefs about the inappropriateness of strong negative emotions all "influenced the feedback strategies and the nature of evoked emotions" (p. 351). They structured the feedback sessions in ways "that were consistent with their beliefs, and yet limited their own frustration, annoyance, anger, anxiety and related stress" (p. 358). To limit the space for negative emotions, they gave students as little opportunity as possible to challenge the teacher. Either they spent most of the time explaining the questions and answers, or they asked students to discuss answers with each other in small groups. When they found themselves becoming too defensive, they avoided contested issues by asking individual students to speak to them privately later. And at all times they masked their own nervousness, frustration, irritation or anxiety, maintaining the appearance of a calm, deliberative persona. These strategies were generally successful in containing student and teacher emotions, but they caused good opportunities for explanations and clarifying misunderstandings to be missed.

The students did not enjoy the test feedback sessions. The emotional intensity of the situation – being given their tests back with the discussion following in the same session – often made them confused, argumentative or too upset to speak. Many said they did not learn anything. Stough and Emmer (1998) suggest that "students who experience strong negative emotions during a test feedback session may require *more* time to process feedback information" (p. 359).

So what does this story tell us about teacher emotions in relation to assessment? Firstly, talking about assessment results can create a situation that evokes strong and mainly negative emotions for all involved. Teachers experienced fear-based emotions – nervousness, anxiety, defensiveness, and anger-based emotions – annoyance, irritation, and frustration in relation to anticipated and real student responses. Students experienced similar emotions, but focussed on a different "object", namely, their exam marks. These emotions were then transferred onto the teacher, who was blamed for the annoying mark. Secondly, teachers' emotions are interwoven with their beliefs and educational goals. For example, holding the belief that students' active involvement in the feedback process is educationally valuable while simultaneously wanting to protect self and students from negative emotions, generated anxiety. Teachers who believed that the exam asked appropriate questions experienced a different emotional response to student challenge compared with teachers who did not hold

that belief. Thirdly, teachers' emotions motivated their actions. For example, their anxiety prior to the sessions drove teachers to prepare carefully and to improve on strategies that had not worked well the previous semester. Thus anxiety spurred them to learn; the more experienced teachers "tended to plan more extensively and to anticipate student questions …and misconceptions" (Stough & Emmer, 1998, p. 359). On the other hand, too much anxiety in the face of student agitation made them feel confused and defensive, and led them to choose strategies that prevented the escalation of student emotion but also limited the space for dialogue and exploration of misunderstood content.

It is interesting to note how the teachers in the Stough and Emmer study were conflicted between their beliefs about formative assessment and their emotions. To explore this conflict more deeply, let me introduce three concepts gained from the literature on teachers' emotions: emotional rules, emotional labour (Zembylas, 2002b, 2003, 2004) and the functional or dysfunctional use of emotions (Winograd, 2003).

Emotional rules are the "norms and standards that reconstruct inner experiences in cultural, social or organizational settings" (Zembylas, 2002b, p. 200), delineating which emotions are permitted and which are not. Emotional rules are seldom explicitly stated. Instead, they operate through ethical codes, professional techniques, or habitual pedagogical practices, for example, teaching science as "objective" or equating "professional" with being reserved and withholding emotions. As a generalization, the emotional rules of schooling expect teachers to control their emotions of anger, anxiety, vulnerability, and to express their feelings of empathy, calmness and kindness.

Emotional labour[4] is the process of self-regulation that teachers need to perform so as to embody and express the emotions that are appropriate to the situation and institutional discourse. It involves controlling professionally unacceptable or generating professionally desirable emotions so that one can better fit in to prevailing norms and emotional rules. Yet emotional labour is also about exploring emotions to find the insights they offer so as to become a more capable person in the situation. Or, as Zembylas puts it:

> there may be unfavourable consequences of emotional labour – self-alienation, disappointment or frustration – but emotional labour can (also) produce favourable results, including increased satisfaction, self-esteem, and psychological well-being. There are thus both alienating and liberating forms of emotional labour (2004, p. 317).

The third concept elaborates on emotional labour by distinguishing between the functional and the dysfunctional use of emotions.

> The functional uses of emotion tend to alert teachers to problems, so they can effectively take action to address those problems. The dysfunctional uses of emotions reflect situations in which teachers' emotions (especially dark emotions like anger and disgust) do not lead to positive action but, instead, lead to the blaming of either self, students, parents, or the system (Winograd, 2003, p. 1642).

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[4] In other writings, emotional labour is also referred to as "emotion management" (Oplatka, 2007) "emotion work" (Winograd, 2003), "emotional regulation" (Ekrun *et al.,* 2007), "emotional navigation" (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008), with slight differences in emphasis.

Dysfunctional uses of emotion keep teachers stuck, while functional uses of the same emotions can propel teachers into action that improves the situation for them and (usually) their students. Thus functional, and particularly a liberating form of emotional labour can potentially be a driving force for professional transformation.

To return to the conflicted teachers in Stough and Emmer's study, they made functional use of their emotions when they were motivated to plan and structure the feedback sessions carefully. Yet they were still caught in traditional emotional rules, for example, that emotions in the classroom are to be avoided. They did not consider the validity of their anxiety or their students' anger, so they could not acknowledge and overcome these emotions. The teachers performed emotional labour that protected but did not liberate them. If they had, they might have restructured the feedback sessions in ways that could harmonise their emotions with their beliefs about the value of formative assessment[5].

Zembylas (2002a) makes the important point that:

> Traditional pedagogies (for example, teach to the test, teach children "scientific knowledge") include emotional rules that shut down new pedagogies; therefore implementing new pedagogies involves resisting these emotional rules and encouraging new ones that make teachers feel empowered (p. 97).

If new pedagogies require new emotional rules, it implies that a reform effort is more likely to succeed when it takes account of unspoken emotional rules. In South Africa, and in other countries, there is a trend in assessment policy that encourages teachers to make use of formative assessment for learning in addition to existing summative assessment. Paul Black and his team (2003) point to the tensions that this dual focus generates, showing how teachers find it depressing and frustrating. I want to argue that it can be illuminating to investigate the emotional rules that underlie these two forms of assessment. A basic emotional reality of assessment is that success evokes pleasant, energising emotions while failure makes people feel uncomfortable and de-energised. Yet how this failure is defined and dealt with can lead to very different emotional rules.

For example, summative assessment works on the premise that students are responsible for their results, particularly their failures. From this follow the emotional rules that teachers should not show, nor preferably have, any negative emotions and that they should maintain an emotional distance between assessors and assessed. A teacher can thus identify with student success without taking on the burden of failure. In addition, summative assessment assumes a culture of "teach first, then test", which means the more pleasurable interactions around learning can be separated in time from the less pleasurable emotions evoked by assessment. Any feedback given by teachers is doing students a favour. By contrast, formative assessment is premised on teachers being co-responsible for student progress, which means they need to engage with students' misunderstandings and find ways of disrupting them. It thus operates with the emotional rule that teachers should be interested in, and even excited about "failures", because mistakes provide the opportunity for renewed

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[5] By, for example, creating a time separation between the two processes of students receiving the marks, and engaging with the feedback, or by talking about the emotions directly.

learning. This might be more effectively accomplished if the presence of emotions is acknowledged. In addition, formative assessment assumes a culture of teaching interwoven with assessment, which means the teacher is constantly offering feedback, be it praise or correction, making both pleasurable and difficult emotions part of the ongoing flow of cognitive interaction.

These examples show how the emotional rules underlying formative assessment are more demanding of the personhood of the teacher. Teachers are unlikely to change their assessment practice from summative to formative, unless they change not only their beliefs but also their emotional rules.

Acknowledging and changing emotional rules requires emotional labour. If the traditional emotional rules remain, formative assessment becomes emotionally conflicted. Negative emotions towards failure de-energise teachers and make them less able to re-engage with students on the mistakes under discussion. As teacher educators, if we want teachers to take up the challenge of formative assessment, we need to talk about releasing the fear of failure and mistakes, and replacing it with enthusiasm for unexpected learning opportunities. We need to make conscious and acknowledge the different emotional rules underlying these different forms of assessment practice. Achieving this involves doing emotional labour, for all involved.

Accountability measures intensify teachers' emotions

As mentioned in the introduction, holding schools and teachers accountable for learner achievement is becoming common to education systems internationally.[6] Hargreaves (2003) describes how in the late 1990s, teachers in Ontario, Canada were divided in their responses to curriculum and assessment policy changes. Many valued the substance of the changes and saw them as "promising starting points for future improvement" (p. 75). But "the opposite was true for teachers' responses to system-wide testing" (p. 76). Most teachers saw these tests as having little value for improving teaching and learning, believing that the tests "neither motivated pupils to learn nor enhanced their confidence as teachers" (p. 76). Teachers perceived and experienced classroom assessment very differently from external, standardised assessment. Whereas the new curriculum and assessment policy "encouraged and demanded deep learning from students", the system-wide testing "in some ways actively hinders teachers in supporting their pupils to learn in a knowledge society" (p. 76).

Teachers' emotions towards assessment are profoundly affected by this tension between the intention of educational policy to promote learning and the implementation of standardised assessment to ensure political accountability. If teachers' emotions around success and failure are intense in the "low-stakes" context of classroom assessment, they are considerably more fraught in the "high-stakes" context of standardised assessment accountability. It is important to understand accountability as providing a context that generates teachers' "background emotions" (Nussbaum, 2001, p 69), which may influence or colour the emotional tone of their classroom assessment.

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[6] The focus of this section is not on whether accountability policies are delivering on their promise of improved student learning, but to reflect on the emotional experiences and responses of teachers.

Smith (1991) investigated teacher responses to the introduction of standardised assessment in Iowa, making six hard-hitting claims, all of which she substantiated with solid evidence. The first three claims describe teachers' emotional responses to external, standardised assessments:

1. The publication of test scores produces feelings of shame, embarrassment, guilt and anger in teachers and the determination to do what is necessary to avoid such feelings in the future.
2. Beliefs about the invalidity of the test and the necessity to raise scores set up feelings of dissonance and alienation.
3. Beliefs about the emotional impact of testing on young children generate feelings of anxiety and guilt among teachers (p. 9).

These negative emotions were evoked because the standardised tests conflicted with teachers' educational ideals and beliefs, while the public nature of the test scores evoked a sense of failure. Teachers' judgements that the external tests had negative value for their own and their students' flourishing, threatened their moral and professional integrity. The resulting shame, alienation and guilt left teachers scrambling for changes to their practice that would avoid such negative emotions in future.

Policy-makers and test-designers might argue that this adoption of new teaching practices was a positive response, but Smith's next three claims contradict that. She showed how a focus on assessment reduced the time available for learning, how it reduced curriculum coverage and how it limited the range of teaching strategies adopted. In common parlance, this is called "teaching to the test" – the examination becomes the curriculum by default.[7] Like Stough and Emmer, Smith found that teachers' desire to avoid painful emotions led them to use strategies that limited the possibilities for teaching and learning.

Stecher & Barron (1999) investigated the effects of high-stakes accountability testing in Kentucky. They did not engage with teachers' emotions, as they used a survey to collect their data (not interviews and long-term observation as Smith had done), but they do mention effects on teachers that point to emotional responses. They found that testing adds "considerable burdens to teachers and students", that annual changes "create a level of uncertainty that may make teachers uncomfortable", and that teachers "respond strongly" to public reporting of test scores (p. 34). They also noted behavioural changes of teachers in response to accountability testing, for example, "teachers' participation in professional development, their allocation of instructional time across subjects (in self-contained classrooms), and the relative emphasis they placed on specific topics within the subjects of mathematics and writing" (p. 12). In spite of Stecher and Barron's noticeably neutral tone and less direct engagement with teachers compared to Smith, they essentially come up with

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[7] Amrein and Berliner (2002) are an example of quantitative researchers who present similar findings of how high-stakes testing leads teachers into strategies that deny students the opportunities to learn. They also present evidence of an "exodus" (p. 45) of teachers from the US public school system because of the pressure on their professional identity and the stress generated by the compliance required by standardised tests. As Amrein and Berliner do not elaborate on the emotions of teachers leaving, I have not elaborated on studies like theirs. (See also next footnote.)

the same finding: that external, standardised assessment for accountability purposes is not welcomed by teachers.

Falk and Drayton (2004) report similar, yet more context-sensitive, findings from Massachusetts[8]. Like Smith (1991), they found broad agreement among almost all the science teachers across six schools with regards to "teachers' reservations about the test content, level of difficulty and length, as well as concerns about negative effects that failing would have on students' morale" (2004, p. 356). But the context in which the new test was administered made a noticeable difference. Depending on district, teachers had different opinions and emotional responses related to whether the test caused alteration in classroom and curricular practices, whether it was complementary or destructive to inquiry-based science, and how it affected teachers' morale and love of teaching (p. 356). The factors shaping teachers' emotional responses and morale were firstly, the curriculum culture and attitude to the test generated by district leadership and secondly, the socio-economic status of the student community in the district. When a district's strategy to improve test scores was "in sync with" their existing vision of good science education, teachers were more likely accept it, but when the district strategy was "a clear departure from" the vision, it was more likely for teachers to express resentment, with a subsequent decrease in their effectiveness as teachers and love of teaching (p. 383). When students came from low socio-economic status communities, "teachers in highly challenged settings were often left demoralised as the gulf between test expectations and students' current skills seemed unbridgeable" (p. 383). Thus, assessment strategies are demoralising for teachers when they demand substantial changes, are enforced, go against teachers' ideals and are inappropriate to socio-economic context.

In terms of the logic of accountability through system-wide testing, teachers can no longer create a separation between themselves and their failing students. Before accountability, they could blame poor results on the tests, the school management, the socio-economic status of the community, or the students themselves. But accountability closes off these avenues of emotional relief. By holding teachers accountable and condemning the teacher along with the students, it intensifies teachers' unpleasant emotions of failure. It is not surprising that in socio-economic contexts where students do badly in external tests, teachers experience strong negative emotions towards the test and demoralization about their jobs.

Accountability processes emphasise the external goods of the practice of teaching over and above the internal goods – a good teacher is one whose students achieve high marks in externally set, standardised tests, not someone who enables each child to progress. It also shifts the role definition of the teacher from being the assessor to being one of the assessed. This is where Kelchtermans' (1996, 2005) concept of vulnerability as a structural feature of

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[8] In their literature review, Falk and Drayton trace the debate around the effects of high-stakes testing from 1991 to 2003, presenting much research that illustrates limiting effects on curriculum practice, increased test preparation time, increased test scores not generalising to increased understanding, negative motivation of low-achieving students and deteriorating relationships between teachers and students, while a few studies suggest that the effects "may be overrated by both advocates and opponents" (p. 350). I am tempted to enter the debate, on the basis that if high-stakes testing makes teachers feel insecure and negative about their work, it has to rejected. But actually, emotions and change processes have a more complex relationship than that, and given the focus of this article on emotions, I cannot explore or come to a conclusion regarding the high-stakes testing debate.

the job becomes particularly useful. He argues that teachers are judged on achieving outcomes that are intrinsically uncertain because they are subject to administrative demands over which they have no control, work in isolation from other adults yet are judged by them, and cannot produce full marks for all of their students all of the time. "Being a teacher implies that one's actions and decisions can always be questioned" (Kelchtermans, 2005, p. 999). As public accountability for high-stakes standardised assessment increases teachers' vulnerability to being questioned and blamed, it increases the emotional intensity of their assessment work.

Accountability might evoke inadmissible emotions around assessment

Hargreaves (2004) makes a contribution to the accountability debate that comes from a completely different perspective. Like Falk and Drayton (2004), his concern is for social justice, as the schools whose students most often fail the system-wide tests are schools in communities of low economic status. He is critical of the policies and processes that determine and pronounce on school failure from the outside, and asks the interesting question of what might motivate them.

In his answer, Hargreaves makes a novel connection between social injustice, school failure and the emotion of disgust. He describes the limitations of various technical definitions of school failure, showing how it is always the schools in poor communities that are defined as failing. He then introduces the emotion of disgust, which is one of the six basic, universally experienced emotions as outlined by Darwin. Its evolutionary function is to safeguard a person against infection, contamination or contagion by generating immediate withdrawal from any possibly disease-carrying object. Disgust thus causes a person to step back and separate from the disgusting object. Accusations of disgusting behaviour can also be used to condemn an unpopular group of people (see also Hammond, 2005).

Hargreaves uses Sennett's research into the class struggles of immigrants to the USA to argue that "disgust and its opposite, distinction, are the basic emotions of social exclusion – the means by which we shrink from the disabled, marginalize those of low social or economic standing, and express revulsion at racial or ethnic difference" (2004, p. 15). He then takes the idea a step further into the world of education to claim, "distinction and disgust define the emotional economy of social exclusion that demarcates success from failure. The educational basis of that economy is the concept of ability (and more recently, of achievement or performance)" (p. 15). Hargreaves thus positions an emotion as powerful as disgust at the core of accountability and our response to failure at school.

Hargreaves refers to his own research (2000) to show how students' emotions are engaged so as to promote learning in primary school, but that by secondary school, students' emotions are seen as "disturbing intrusions into the classroom order" (2004, p. 17). Emotions are more frowned upon the closer one moves to "distinction". Academic achievement thus becomes linked to a passionless sense of order and control, in contrast to the sense of belonging and "visceral emotionality" (p. 17) of the lower classes. Schools might focus on the "relatively simple (and neutral) basic skills" for younger children, but seldom teach the more sophisticated "kinds of knowledge and learning that underpin our concepts of ability and achievement and that create emotional economies of inclusion and exclusion, distinction and

disgust" (p. 19). He concludes: school failure (of schools and individuals within schools) "resonates emotionally" with "the failure of working class or ethnic minority people" (p. 20), and it invokes the disgust of those who achieve distinction within the school system while simultaneously reminding them of "their own more fortunate distinction" (p. 21). Hargreaves' argument is valuable in that it vividly illustrates the power of the unacknowledged emotion of disgust towards those who have failed.

Disgust is a powerful emotion to use in relation to school failure. I found Hargreaves' article quite shocking when I first read it. I could allow for pity in response to failure, but disgust? Yet when I reflected on the utterances of politicians and the media to failing schools, I became convinced by his argument. And it isn't just the media. Thinking back on my own responses to media stories of dysfunctional schools, I found I need to admit to a twinge of disgust. So I started wondering whether this emotion could be playing a role in teachers' responses to failing students. The idea would appear to go against the findings of Reyna and Weiner (2001), that most teachers prefer a utilitarian approach, looking for means to remedy student failure. But on closer reflection, I think Hargreaves' insight about the emotional undertow of school failure might well be echoed in the relationships between teachers and students. Teachers might well initially feel sympathy for failing students, as pity generates emotional distance from the failure, which allows one to feel superior whilst retaining sympathy. Yet sympathy disappears in the face of feeling threatened. What happens to teachers emotionally when sympathy and the utilitarian approach do not increase student performance, and after teachers' anger and retribution-punishment has generated student alienation but still no achievement? Disgust, which contains an element of anger, which rejects the "object" and separates it from oneself, and which allows one to feel superior, might well be a last-ditch stand against the threat of failure, even if the failure is embodied in people one knows. This situation is likely to be intensified when teachers are held accountable for, that is, identified with their students' failure. Nobody wants to be avoided and treated with disgust. Joining the disgusted audience rather than suffering the disgust of the powerful might be an understandable defence mechanism.

Accountability measures may reinforce undesirable emotional rules

In addition to standardised assessment, there are accountability measures that assess teachers' work directly, namely whole school inspections, performance-related pay or curriculum revisions. These accountability measures evoke even more intense and negative emotions in teachers, in some cases producing long-term effects that may colour teachers' approach to teaching and assessing their students.

Let me illustrate by using three examples. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) documented several case studies of school inspections, in each case describing the preparatory work, the actual inspection and the aftermath. They illustrated the teachers' "fear, anguish, anger, despair, depression, humiliation, grief and guilt" (p. 340) in careful detail. They found that teachers' loss of confidence in their work and feelings of worthlessness continued long after the inspection was over, even though a relatively good report had been received. They comment, "it would seem that the more professional the teachers were, in terms of dedication and efficiency, the more emotional they were over the inspection" (p. 339). Mahony, Menter and Hextall (2004) investigated the emotional impact of performance-related pay, and found that

teachers felt insulted, furious, betrayed, resentful and distressed about having to "jump through hundreds of hoops" (p. 439) in order to get the pay rise they deserved. They comment, "negative emotion such as anger does not become positive, when, after a while it quietens to cynicism and weariness" (p. 454). Kornfeld, Grady, Marker and Ruddell (2007) researched reactions of teacher educators during a process of programme approval so as to comply with new curriculum standards. The teacher educators felt anger, resentment, fear, outrage, defeat, helplessness, inadequacy, like being "naked in the dark", and also overwhelmed, confused, demoralised, "like getting whacked on the head" (pp. 1911-1912). The loss of professional control made them feel disheartened and demeaned in their professional identity, disillusioned by an onerous and depressing task, and upset, appalled, embarrassed and humiliated by the lack of trust implied in the administrative requirements (pp. 1912-1914). Although consensus among staff was that the new standards did not improve their work and they had not changed their teaching, Kornfeld *et al.* analysed department minutes and memos for the two years after the accountability process, and found that the language had in fact become "considerably more technocratic" (p. 1923). In all three examples, teachers were exposed to a climate of assessment that rewarded conformity to institutional rules more than individual progress and change. They were left feeling professionally and personally undermined by the institutional ways in which they were assessed. As expressed through their emotion, teachers' appraisal of accountability is that of a traumatic experience, not of something that enables them and their students to flourish.

What is it about accountability that makes teachers feel so bad about themselves and their work? Accountability imposes a burden of additional paper work, which teachers experience as a distraction from their real work. It appears to distrust teachers' word about what they are doing through its demand for extensive "evidence", which is hurtful to professional identity. And it seems to me that accountability generates insecurity and guilt by implying there is one perfect way to teach and assess, which is contained in long, disconnected lists of abstract criteria that no teacher can fully measure up to.

Unless teachers actively engage in functional emotional labour (which Kornfeld and a few of his colleagues did in the process of writing their article), these negative experiences of being assessed might well become the situational background for their assessment of students. In that way, accountability measures may set emotional rules of impersonal distance and disengaged objectivity that come to govern classroom assessment.

REFLECTION

What picture of teachers' emotions towards assessment emerges from this mosaic of research literature?

The research literature presented comes from the USA, Canada, the UK, Belgium, and covers primary, secondary and tertiary education teachers. Taken collectively, the studies paint a picture of teachers grappling with emotional complexity. They illustrate how teachers are sympathetic to failure when they think it is not the student's "fault" but tend towards anger when it is (Reyna & Weiner, 2001); how the feedback required by formative assessment is stressful for teachers unless they begin operating with different emotional rules (Stough &

Emmer, 1998; Zembylas, 2004, 2005); and how public failure might generate emotions that are not easy to acknowledge (Hargreaves, 2004). Assessment is by its nature an emotionally conflicted aspect of teachers' work because it confronts teachers with the limits of their efficacy (Kelchtermans, 1996) and yet is central to both the internal satisfaction and the social recognition of teaching (MacIntyre, 1981). It is thus important for research to acknowledge and explore the meaning of these emotions.

Accountability measures represent the external goods of the practice and can be seen to increase the discomfort of assessment emotions (Hargreaves, 1994, 2003; Smith, 1991; Stecher & Barron, 1999). High-stakes, standardised assessment leads to teacher demoralization particularly in low socio-economic contexts where students have little chance of success, or in contexts where the external assessments do not correspond with teachers' ideals of good teaching (Falk & Drayton, 2004).

Accountability measures that directly assess teachers' work often leave them angry, ashamed, professionally weary (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Mahony *et al.,* 2004) and "ontologically insecure" (Ball, 2003). Occasionally, when functional use is made of negative emotions, teachers can become determined to reveal and agitate against the excesses of accountability (Kornfeld *et al.,* 2007).

Are there possibilities for doing assessment in "emotionally sound" ways?[9]

Pekrun, Frenzel, Goetz and Perry (2007) suggest that taking teachers' (and students') emotions seriously could lead to a school environment that promotes greater achievement because it is more "emotionally sound".

> Students' and teachers' achievement emotions can be influenced by changing subjective control and values relating to achievement activities and their outcomes. This can be achieved by shaping the learning environments of students and the occupational environments of teachers in emotionally sound ways (pp. 30-31).

Pekrun *et al.* (2007) suggest several ways in which this could be done. They advocate classroom environments that are cognitively stimulating, that contain feedback loops of positive emotions that motivate teachers and students alike, that provide teachers with chances for autonomy and co-operation and that are framed by institutional goal structures which enable teachers to feel in control. With regard to assessment, they point to the necessity for feedback (to students and teachers) that explains both the required and the actual performance (pp. 31-32). These are all suggestions that increase teachers' sense of doing something valuable and being in control of their actions.

The other research studies also hint at what can be learned from teachers' emotions about the changes needed to improve assessment in the classroom. Reyna and Weiner (2001) point to teachers' desire to be able to make a difference in the quality of their students' performance. This implies that teachers need to feel empowered to try out various ways in which they can teach and otherwise help students to learn. Stough and Emmer's (1998) findings emphasise

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[9] As Dorothee Soelle, a German theologian says, "A language that takes our emotions seriously and gives them real weight in our lives encourages us to think and be and act differently." Quoted in O'Reilley, 2005, p. xi.

the importance for teachers to do the emotional labour required to harmonise the conflict between their beliefs and emotions. This implies that teachers need to work collaboratively and express their emotions as part of their work. Smith (1991) and others point out the danger of teachers closing down opportunities for learning in the face of high-stakes standardised assessments, because they want to avoid the unpleasant emotions involved in public failure, thus implying that the school system should place more emphasis on public success. And if the school accountability system does not want to produce demoralised teachers who in turn produce demoralised learners, then it needs to find more supportive and collaborative ways to assess the quality of teachers' work.

In terms of emotional rules, I found it interesting to notice that both formative assessment and accountability though standardised assessment have changed the traditional emotional rule of summative assessment, but in different directions. The traditional emotional rule stated that students are responsible for their own failure, thus allowing teachers to *distantiate* themselves. This emotional safety valve has now been taken away from teachers. Formative assessment disallows emotional distance from student failure by arguing that teachers need to "re-form" their teaching in response to student misconceptions. It thus foregrounds the emotional rule that failure is temporary and part of a learning curve. Accountability disallows emotional distance from failure by arguing that teachers are accountable to tax-payers for the results of their students. It thus positions teachers as responsible for failure alongside their students, which foregrounds the emotional rule that teachers must carry the guilt and burden of student failure.

These different directions within assessment policy point to the need for teachers (and teacher educators) to start doing the emotional labour required "to deal with the affective aspects of their professional development" (Pekrun *et al.,* 2007, p. 33). Zembylas argues that emotions are sites of potential transformations. He suggests that

> to analyse and challenge emotion norms in education, for example, means to reveal their historicity and contingency that have come to define the limits and possibilities of teachers' and students' understandings of themselves, individually and collectively. By doing so, it is to disturb, destabilise and subvert these rules, to identify some of the weak points and lines of fracture where new affective connections (as counter-hegemonic) might make a difference (2007, p. 459).

Analysing and challenging emotional norms involves teachers in a "liberating form of emotional labour" (Zembylas, 2004, p. 317). When teachers accept the validity of their emotions and reflect on their inherent value-judgements, they can gain insights into the unspoken emotional rules that shape their feelings and behaviour. These insights might lead them to disturbing and subverting the emotional rules, enabling "greater cognitive insight and enriched theoretical discussions" (Nias, 1996, p. 303). This could usefully be done in pre- and in-service teacher education (Zembylas, 2005; Winograd, 2003; Nias, 1996).

CONCLUSION

The intention of this article was to illustrate that assessment is an emotional practice for teachers and that paying attention to the emotions involved can provide useful information

about assessment practices to teachers, teacher educators and policy reformers. For example, by reflecting on the emotional rules regulating different forms of assessment, it becomes clear how accountability is leading in the opposite direction to formative assessment for learning, even though in many countries these policies are introduced at the same time as if they were complementary. Another example are the intensely negative emotions and long-lasting effects evoked in teachers by accountability measures, which point to the need for reconsidering the balance of challenge and support that teachers require if they are to maintain their well-being and positive professional identity, and thereby their effectiveness.

From the small number of research studies available, it is obvious that the field is under-researched. I hope I have been able to show that pursuing research into teachers' emotions in relation to assessment would be a worthwhile enterprise. Assessment needs to be recognised for the emotional practice it is, so that research (and teacher education) can begin to point to possibilities for teachers' emotions as a site for motivating the personal, pedagogical and structural changes necessary for improved approaches to assessment and teaching.

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