

Teachers' 'Small Stories' About Curriculum Reform in South Africa: 'Square Peg in a Round Hole'

Dhanasagaren Govindasamy Naidoo¹ and Nithi Muthukrishna²

*School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, P Bag X 03, Ashwood 3605, South Africa
Fax: 0866184798, Email: ¹<dgnaidoo@mtnloaded.co.za>; ²<muthukri@ukzn.ac.za>*

KEYWORDS Curriculum Reforms. CAPS. Neo-Liberal Globalisation. Dissonance. Emotionality. Knowledge-Power

ABSTRACT The impact of neo-liberal curriculum reform policies is explored in the narratives of primary school teachers in South Africa. The central canons of critical theory and cognitive dissonance theory frame this study. The findings unveil 'small' stories that teachers tell about their experiences and negotiations with curriculum reform shifts from 1997 to 2012. Globalisation of neo-liberal educational policies has had a negative impact on education systems worldwide and the findings illumine the incongruities teachers encounter between policy and practice and the effect this has on their emotionality and identity. The necessary and crucial role of teachers as guardians of knowledge-power is highlighted amidst their inextricable relationships with globalisation, neo-liberalism, educational reforms and teacher work 'glocally'.