



The clash of evaluations

In search of the missing link between school accountability and school improvement – experiences from Cyprus

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Abstract

Purpose – The main purpose of this paper is to examine more closely the tension between, on the one hand, forms of internal school improvement based on internal evaluation measures and, on the other hand, control and legitimisation needs grounded on external evaluation measures.

Design/methodology/approach – The clash of these forms of evaluation is at the core of the paper, dealing in particular with the changing evaluation systems in the Cypriot education system. Therefore, the case study approach is utilised here. More specifically, the case of Cyprus is used as a system under transition in order to move from a primarily teacher inspection system, which is externally driven, to a combination of a teacher/school inspection system, which is based on both external and internal processes and is directed at both formative and summative evaluation processes.

Findings – It is asserted that the new proposed appraisal system for Cyprus addresses the deficiencies of the current evaluation system and generally aims at achieving a balance between external and internal processes. Finally, the conditions for the acceptance and successful implementation of new evaluation systems are described.

Originality/value – The results of the study constitute a rich setting of future developments for Cyprus schools with regard to important issues such as school accountability, school improvement, teacher evaluation, internal school evaluation and external inspection, through the proposed appraisal system. Therefore, the paper provides an important source of information for those who have the responsibility of creating educational policy and planning for the years to come in the area of teacher appraisal.

Keywords Schools, Quality improvement, Teachers, Performance appraisal, Cyprus

Paper type Conceptual paper



1. Why do we care about school evaluation/inspection?

In the past 15 years, there has been an increased emphasis on policies designed to affect large-scale change across school systems at the district, state, or national levels. Competitiveness-driven educational reforms became commonplace across rich and poor nations, as governments sought to defend their global competitiveness by

enhancing the productivity of their domestic labour force. The differences apparent in large-scale assessments, such as PISA and TIMSS, drew attention to a wide range of factors, internal and external to schools and school systems and to their complex interplay.

These competitiveness-driven reforms in Europe can be described as an implicit new steering model or an evaluation-based steering concept. It describes the isochronous combination of:

- decentralisation of decision making with its associated decrease in administrative load and the commensurate increase in school autonomy;
- implementation of education standards (national standards, core curriculum, quality indicators);
- efforts to establish monitoring systems (national education reports, involvement in international large scale assessment tests, large scale surveys, central examinations); and
- evaluations (external and internal forms of evaluation).

In fact, both decentralising and centralising reforms were adopted, setting the stage for new kinds of policy interactions. The comparison of the governance regimes in selected PISA countries has shown evidence, to various degrees (sometimes no more than first steps), of the increasing “trend” – within the international context – to shift decision-making competences away from central authorities towards the lower decision-making levels. Furthermore, some of the countries show a trend towards a (sometimes parallel) centralisation or re-centralisation of competences (Canada, England, and Finland, in part).

The shifting of levels of decision making takes different guises in various countries, but in the main focuses on strengthening the capacity of educational stakeholders to take action at the regional and communal levels or at the individual school level. Sometimes, this development is accompanied by providing education clients (parents in particular) a greater influence (say) in the schools, especially through their participation in school decision-making boards and/or by giving them the right to choose which school to send their children (an option that has financial consequences for the schools). As the comparison indicates, it is not possible to discern, across the countries, one singular pattern of approach to governance systems.

It can also be observed that not one of the countries studied has kept to the primacy of input steering and self-reference. Rather, they have always accompanied the transfer of operative governance competences to individual schools with the establishment of structures geared to steer outputs. These structures include the requirements that schools achieve targets/standards specified by the central authorities; that they undergo inspection conducted by external, independent agencies (quality control) and, that they render accounts (accountability systems). The main motivation for the introduction of accountability systems such as school inspection, underscores the wish to decentralise the education system. The delegation of responsibilities on the meso-level of the corresponding educational administration (as the local level in Sweden) or on the single school level (as in England) and reduction of the state regulations taking place, makes the introduction of new steering mechanisms

necessary. Thus, the school inspection mechanism proved to be one of the central steering and evaluation mechanisms of those “modernised” education systems.

Therefore, on the one hand, large-scale educational reform (systemic reform), by its very nature, allows for the possibility of change of grand dimensions. Larger numbers of children and educators have the potential of being touched in positive ways by improvement efforts, at least according to the theory. Therefore, an analysis on the macro level, focusing on the school system of Cyprus as a whole, was deemed appropriate for the present study.

At the same time, the forces of globalisation, decentralisation, standardisation and evaluation measures that drive large scale educational reform also lead to various challenges, particularly where capacity building and assurance of quality and equity are concerned. Furthermore, it must be recognised that approaches at the system level exclude, to a large extent, essential insights relating to, for example, implementation of policy reforms at the school level. Therefore, any analysis at the macro level must be supplemented by a corresponding “pragmatic problem approach” (Holmes, 1984) that addresses the micro level and focuses on the specific, mainly transversal aspects of school systems. Thus, the paradigm shift from preceding bureaucratic “determination” of schools to subsequent control of schools through educational evaluation can be regarded as a massive intervention into the “grammar” of schooling (Tyack and Tobin, 1994) and will (apart from its intended effects) also produce unintended, undesirable or even counter-productive (side) effects. Therefore, the current study takes a closer look at the field of tension between, on the one hand, forms of “internal school development” and the related internal evaluation measures, and on the other, control and legitimisation needs for different levels of education grounded on external evaluation measures. Evaluation is at present acquiring an ambivalent status. By means of this ambivalence of evaluation the *prima facie* plausible idea of an “evaluation-based steering concept” generates confusion. There is no denial that every form of steering requires a rational basis (i.e. information) and therefore, a steering concept cannot reject data from evaluations. In current constellations however, different measures of evaluation can clash, which disturbs the apparent consensus and leads to counter-productive (side) effects. For instance, one side effect is the reduction of the temporal horizons of education, changes in pace and rhythm of learning and teaching. The way in which we look into the future for both the students and teachers reduces the perspective of the past and the future and makes us live only in the present. The notion of deferred gratification is lost and we care only for now (TIMSS, PISA), that is instant gratification. We are constraining our future into the next period of examination and not into a lifelong activity.

The above mentioned dialectic/ambivalent character of systemic, evaluation-based reforms (to enable at the same time control and development) is at the core of this article, dealing with the changing evaluation systems in the Cypriot education system. In essence, the case of Cyprus will be used as a system under transition in order to move from a primarily teacher inspection system which is externally driven, to a combination of a teacher/school inspection system which is based on both external and internal processes and aims both towards formative and summative evaluation processes.

2. What do we know?

2.1 *What do we know about external school evaluation/inspection?*

External evaluation of schools as exercised through the inspection of schools is a common feature within the education systems of many countries. As a consequence one can find several empirical studies dealing with that topic. The international state of research is characterised by the parallel proliferation of empirical studies focusing on the regional or national governance level, to which some international comparative studies of inspection systems as well as some theoretical contributions at the national and international levels could be added. However, an empirical, data-based research on school inspection does not exist, at least as far as we could find out.

2.1.1 International comparative studies of European school inspection systems. One important actor in the area of school inspection at the European level is the Standing International Conference of Central and General Inspectorates of Education (SICI). A total of 25 jurisdictions from Europe are represented in this conference. SICI initiated for the first time in 1999 the publication of the descriptive study *Inspectorates of Education in Europe* (Maes *et al.*, 1999), which was edited by the Flemish DVO (Dienst voor Onder-wijsontwikkeling). This study took 14 inspection systems into consideration and undertook furthermore an international comparative analysis. Projects which benefited from this research effort are mostly international comparative research projects dealing with the evaluation of mathematics achievement at the secondary school level (see Kleijne, 2002), studies on the effects of self-evaluation of schools (SICI, 2003), as well as self-evaluation of the inspectorates themselves (SICI, 2005, 2006). Furthermore, in 2005 a study (undertaken by the Dutch inspectorate) that compared eight states and/or regions was published. This study, focused primarily on the relationship of self-evaluation and inspection (see Onderwijsinspectie, 2005). Moreover, the study of van Ackeren (2003) dealing with evaluation feedback and school development in England, France and The Netherlands, contains a comparative analysis, that takes central examinations, tests and the inspection systems into consideration. Finally, an international comparative study undertaken by Böttcher and Kotthoff (2007), which was based on country reports from England, Finland, The Netherlands, Switzerland and the USA identified international trends as well as differences between national school inspection systems and formulated conditions of success for the development of school inspection systems.

2.1.2 Theoretical studies for single European countries. In single analyses of school inspection provided in the English-speaking research community to a great extent by Dutch scientists, a broad spectrum of themes is mentioned. These analyses, which are also used partially for empirical research dealing with the effects of school inspection, take a look at the performances/opportunities and limitations of the reconstruction and evaluation of a program theory on school inspection (Ehren *et al.*, 2005; Scheerens and Witziers, 2005), with the theory of effectiveness on school inspection (see Ehren and Visscher, 2006) and with the principle of reciprocity in school inspections. Furthermore, of notable interest is the ongoing discussion in England about the relationship of school inspection and educational research (see Hegarty, 1998; Cullingford, 1999; Bell, 2004).

2.1.3 Empirical studies for single European countries. In England some studies dealing with the evaluation of inspection practice and/or the acceptance of inspections were conducted by single stakeholders, OfSTED or independent research institutes that were commissioned by OfSTED (Ipsos MORI, 2006; McCrone *et al.*, 2006). One can

add a number of case studies (Thrupp, 2001). In this context, there was an exemplary empirical study conducted by Chapman (2002), which looked at case studies of schools in different social contexts. The study focused on the perceptions of the inspection process through comments made by the teachers involved; furthermore, the study focused on the initiation of change in instructional and non instructional working areas through inspection and on the commonalities of major areas of improvement on the side of the inspection and on the side of the school. In any case, within the English inspection system one can find the most numerous empirical findings on school development as a consequence of inspection (e.g. emotional effects on the school staff, organisational learning, student achievement) (Ousten *et al.*, 1997; Cuckle *et al.*, 1998; Schagen and Weston, 1998; Wilcox, 2000; Rosenthal, 2004). There are findings, which point at counter-productive and non intended effects caused by school inspection (Kotthoff, 2003): among the most important negative side effects are a greater workload and huge emotional costs (stress) on the side of the teacher while they are preparing themselves for the inspection process. Furthermore, there are findings on mid- and long-term negative effects such as a standardising effect/influence on the teaching process, the creation of a hierarchy of the school system (league tables) and, as a consequence of this, the deterioration of the equity process within the education system. Moreover, the nature of authority and its political manifestation in instrumentalism, the commoditisation of school leaders and managerialism and the totalisation of education under the rubric of employment, skills and metrics is often mentioned as a negative side-effect of the evaluation process employed. At the same time, school inspection can lead to positive effects, which in a long-term perspective can lead to real improvements of the school quality. These positive effects include an increased sensitivity among the teaching staff about questions regarding school quality (through the identification of strengths and weaknesses). The quality improvement effects of the school inspection can be best observed by taking a look at the category of “schools requiring special measures” in England: the majority of these schools can be removed from this category within an interval of two years. Furthermore, 60 percent of schools belonging to this category are usually classified by the next school inspection cycle as a good school (see Böttcher and Kotthoff, 2007).

In The Netherlands, the findings concerning developments as a consequence of school inspection are not clear and certainly there are fewer studies. Based on the proclamations of the teachers’ union *Allgemene Onderwijsbond* (AOB), a core problem turns out to be, that only a few schools take the interview of the school leaders as representative for the whole school and that there is only a small amount of reliable information dealing with the opinions of the teachers and their views for school development as a consequence of school inspection. In effect, what teachers are suggesting is that an interview with the school principal about the effects of the inspection process is not enough, and that more attention should be given to the views of the teachers as well.

In any case, even though the aforementioned limitations exist, studies indicate, that only a minority (between 6 and 16 percent) of the Dutch teachers think that the school inspection is not stimulating and that it is not worth it to undergo this procedure (in terms of a cost-benefit analysis). In any case, it seems that the overall acceptance of the school inspection process among teachers is decreasing because of the growing standardisation of the inspection process (see Böttcher and Kotthoff, 2007).

In Sweden, the findings are, in general, significantly more positive. In a study, undertaken by the inspectorate institution Skolverket in 2004, the majority of the participating actors responded that they are quite or very satisfied with the inspection process. This positive finding was strengthened by the study of an external institution, which arrived at the conclusion that almost every school had begun to work on the deficiencies which had been identified by the school inspection and that 63 percent of the persons interviewed expected long-term positive effects from the school inspection process (see Böttcher and Kotthoff, 2007).

Finally, the findings in Switzerland dealing with the development of the school inspection system are positive to their greatest part. But this kind of positive feedback – as representatives of the Luzern Fachstelle for school evaluation admit in a self-critical way – has to be interpreted with great precaution, because they just evaluated schools which participated on a voluntary basis, and thus, there is a generalisability problem of their results, as this was a self-selected sample.

2.2 What do we know about the relationship of school internal evaluation and external inspection?

Although the motives for the introduction of school inspection in the various education systems around the world are quite similar, the different ways in which it is implemented, especially the (inter)-relationship of self-evaluation and external evaluation, historically, differ quite a lot among the various countries. The idea nevertheless, that school self-evaluation and school inspection are representing complementary processes, has been spread out in the meantime in many European education systems, although there are still country-specific differences in the accentuation of those two aspects, especially when it comes to the use of formative and summative evaluations according to the main goals of the inspection process.

For a long time in the literature, a close correlation between internal self-evaluation and external school inspection has been put forward. If one is asking about the conceptual connection of these two evaluation processes of school accountability, he/she can distinguish striking differences among certain European countries. A close relationship between these two processes of school accountability exists in The Netherlands. The Dutch school inspectorate not only takes the self-evaluation of the school as a starting point for the inspection, but it also avoids to collect externally organised evaluation-data unless the school internal evaluation fails to meet certain quality indicators/standards. At the other end of the spectrum of the internal/external evaluation relationship is the English school inspection model which also takes results of the school internal evaluation into consideration, but still considers the evaluation of the school primarily as an external process which takes place completely decoupled from the daily experiences and activities of the single school. In Sweden and in some regions of Switzerland e.g. Luzern (Canton), they try to integrate the school internal evaluation and the school inspection process into a broader system of quality management. Therefore, schools are given qualitative standards of processes for the school internal evaluation, which are supposed to make sure that the results of internal and external evaluation should refer to each other in a reciprocal way, thus, encouraging and facilitating a comparison of the reports produced by the two processes.

The main conclusion of the recent reforms of the school inspectorate in the various countries and regions examined is comparable: one should continue in general with the

regular inspection of all schools, but the main goal is to create a process which has the minimal invasive appearance of control, that should only be used if the documented results of the school's self-evaluation provide evidence that there are problems, which should be further and more in-depth examined by the external school inspection process. To put it in a different way: the more positive school internal evaluation results are, the less intense and intrusive is the external school inspection (idea of proportional evaluation as it's formulated and done in The Netherlands).

3. How does the education evaluation system work in Cyprus?

3.1 *The evaluation system within the broader steering concept of the education system*

The main philosophy which underpins the education system and which is of most significance to the roles of leaders in Cyprus is that of centralisation of powers and of seniority within the system. Power emanates only from the Ministry of Education through the Inspectorate and the schools and their principals are obliged to obey without really questioning the system and its authority. The second main philosophy is to tell everybody to be patient and that eventually (usually short before retirement) they will reach higher administrative positions. Indeed, as the UNESCO (1997) auditors argued, three themes can be underlined that probably formulate the philosophy and values of the Cyprus educational system:

- (1) *Money.* The system is strongly centralised and everything needs to go through the hands of the Director of Primary, Technical/Vocational or Secondary Education within the Ministry of Education, as the case might be. For everything there has to be a written authorisation. Principals cannot handle money; not a single cent, even though there are recent efforts to change this and allow them to handle as much as 3,000 Euros per year for routine tasks that need to be taken care of around the school. As principals often mention, the country trusts them with the education of its children but it does not trust them with handling even small sums of money.
- (2) *Personnel management.* One of the biggest obstacles in being an effective principal is that the principals have no say as to the appointment of personnel to their school. They have to work with whatever and whoever is sent to them by the Ministry and the Education Service Commission (ESC).
- (3) *The power of the centre.* The third theme, being strongly intertwined with the others, is the power of the Ministry and the lack of power of the principal. Many principals nowadays argue both, that the principal should have greater authority and that the school should be more autonomous.

These ascertainties have an impact on the evaluation system as well. The high degree of centralisation as well as the limited powers of the principal, especially as regards to personnel management, creates a disproportionate practice of internal and external evaluation with the latter being significantly favoured at the expense of the former. For example, although the principals complete an annual report for each teacher who serves in his/her school, this ultimately ends up in the hands of the school inspectors who are in charge of the external evaluation. The inspectors can use or throw away the principals' reports.

In the context of internal evaluation procedures, teachers have to submit an Individual Information Report documenting their contributions to school life as well as

their efforts for personal and professional growth during a particular school year. This report constitutes a kind of self-evaluation of the teachers' performance in relation to specific domains of action. It is submitted to the school inspector through the principal and it is placed in the record file of each teacher. However, in practice it is neither used for internal nor for external evaluation. This is first, due to the fact that no feedback is received by the teachers as to possible improvements they could undertake and second, because school inspectors do not really take it into account for external evaluation purposes. As a result, the report invariably becomes only a matter of responding to pointless bureaucratic procedures.

In general, the teacher evaluation data are held and utilised by the school inspectors. Although they claim that the evaluation system should attempt to achieve the two broader functions of accountability and improvement they also admit that the system in Cyprus does not really address improvement and restricts itself to providing information for the teachers' promotion (Kyriakides and Campbell, 2003). As a result, any attempt to establish internal evaluation procedures serve in fact external accountability purposes. This is true not only in relation to teacher evaluation, but also in the case of evaluating the deputy principal's or the principal's performance.

3.2 Areas of evaluation in Cyprus

3.2.1 Inspection of the school. Each education department has its own team of inspectors (about 40 inspectors in primary and about 45 inspectors in the secondary education department), who inspect teachers, deputy principals and principals during a wider inspection for the whole school: the so-called General Inspection. General inspections are undertaken by a team of Inspectors (usually three inspectors per team), who carry out a "whole-school" inspection, which, in reality, is an inspection of the work done by the principal. In essence, these whole school inspections will give the principal a grade based on which the principal may be promoted to inspector.

Furthermore, inspectors take part in curriculum development activities, the production of textbooks, the identification of other curricular resources, the setting of examinations for the school-leaving certificate and for the University entrance examinations. In a sense, inspectors act as a link between the Ministry and the individual school units. They are in essence the policy implementation units of the Ministry of Education. Although their role is over-encompassing and very important for the functioning of the educational system, they generally lack the necessary training and other qualifications to successfully exercise their duties.

3.2.2 Inspection/evaluation of teachers. Inspections for newly appointed teachers are supposed to be done twice a year until they become permanent civil servants. Then, inspection becomes erratic and not so important until the twelfth year of service for a particular teacher when (by law) the teacher must be supervised in order to earn a grade for promotion which (in reality) usually happens around the eighteenth-twentieth year of service in the education system.

Teachers can be promoted to a deputy principal and principal. There is no specific pre-service training programme designed for becoming qualified for the post of deputy principal. The procedure is based on:

- seniority;
- an assessment by the Inspectors;

- additional academic qualifications; and
- an interview with the Commission (ESC).

The inspectors' evaluation on one hand, and seniority on the other, carry a considerable weight. The teacher evaluation outcome improves with seniority and age and, therefore, the result is that older teachers are mostly the ones to be promoted. Consequently, appointment to a deputy principal post occurs when primary and secondary school teachers are around 45 and 55 years of age respectively. In the field of secondary general education, there are two different job specifications for deputy principals. There are deputy principals who are responsible for administrative matters and, there are others who act as co-ordinators of the subject areas taught. Then, a deputy principal can become a principal. Again, the main criterion for the promotion is age and seniority with slight adjustments for additional qualifications. Appointments to the principalship occur not long before retirement age (which is 60 years currently). Then, principals and deputy principals can be promoted to Inspectors. Promotion requires at least a Master's Degree in a particular subject or in education.

4. Analysis of evaluation (appraisal) systems in Cyprus and the development of a new appraisal system for teachers and schools in Cyprus

4.1 Conceptual and methodological challenges

Taking into account the purposes of the Cyprus' educational system it is important to address a number of conceptual and methodological challenges related to the analysis of the different evaluation[1] systems proposed under the new evaluation processes which included evaluation at the individual teacher level as well as at the whole school level. The assumption is that whole school evaluation for improvement, needs to begin with classroom and teacher evaluation in order to improve the teaching processes employed at the school; further, through the improvement of these processes, whole school improvement will be made possible.

Furthermore, a basic guiding principle for the development of the proposed appraisal system (PAS) was that there needs to be the right balance between external and internal controls on one hand, and between formative and summative processes on the other; moreover, it was felt that there should be a balance between the two "Ps" of evaluation, that is process and product. As the pendulum of evaluation around the globe is shifting into more of a "product" approach, more attention to the "process" as well was desirable. Thus, the analytical framework produced by the research team in Cyprus was based on and composed out of the following units:

- *Distinction between the evaluation types – formative vs summative evaluation.* With regard to evaluation one can distinguish between two general purposes, the formative and the summative one (Pashiardis, 1994, 1996; Harlen and James, 1997; Stronge, 1997; Kyriakides, 2001; Tucker and Stronge, 2005). The formative evaluation aims at improving the teacher or/and the school's effectiveness and might be associated with research on improving educational effectiveness. This specific type of evaluation is not threatening to the teacher concerned, and thus, it can undoubtedly provide the greatest help possible towards improvement through a process that is collaborative and developmental in nature (Harris, 1986; Pashiardis, 1996; Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002). On the other end, summative evaluation aims at selecting personnel for various roles and

purposes. More specifically, it aims at identifying those teachers who are most effective in relation to specific criteria mainly for promotion purposes within the hierarchy.

- *Determination of evaluation criteria.* The determination of evaluation criteria for teachers could be based on the employer's job description or/and on the content of the professional code an educational system might have developed (Johnson, 1997). The lack of a professional code in Cyprus as well as the fact that the description of the role of teachers is too vague creates significant difficulties in determining evaluation criteria. Owing to the paucity of a professional code, the different models measuring teacher effectiveness could be utilised as sources of developing evaluation criteria (Cheng and Tsui, 1999; Kyriakides *et al.*, 2006). These models mentioned in the international literature on educational effectiveness (e.g. resource utilisation model, working process model, continuous learning model) might lead to the development of different evaluation criteria (Kyriakides *et al.*, 2006).

Any educational system which wants to be responsive to the wider continuous changes imposed by international developments, should also ensure that the evaluation criteria are not static and permanent but flexible enough to be adequately adapted to the range of effectiveness' characteristics of the teacher and the school unit (Pashiardis, 1993; Kyriakides, 2001).

- *Use of multiple sources.* There is an indispensable need to have a multidimensional evaluation system in relation to the data collection sources (Harris, 1987; Cashin, 1988; Manatt, 1988; Gastel, 1991; Pashiardis, 1996; Hoyle and Skrla, 1999; Danielson and McGreal, 2000). Having a variety of evaluation sources, the internal validity of the evaluation system is increased while the consistency of further evaluation systems is also tested for. In this way, the appraisal system provides a more objective and expanded picture of the teacher's work (Norris, 1990; Stronge, 1997; Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002; Stronge and Tucker, 2003). As a result, we decrease the contingency of reaction and contestation of the evaluation institution that is observed in the case of the current system. However, one basic problem arising from the existence of many collection data sources concerns the difficulty in developing unidimensional scales measuring the teacher and school's effectiveness (Kyriakides *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, in the context of developing the PSA there has been an examination of the possible ways of developing multidimensional scales measuring teacher effectiveness as well as ways of utilising the scales for purposes of developing corresponding profiles of the teachers and the schools, in order to develop (on a systematic basis) a policy of improving educational effectiveness.
- *Necessity for development of specific measurement tools.* The development of measurement tools is especially important in order to collect data in relation to each evaluation criterion. The necessity of developing specific evaluation tools is explicit, since without these, any evaluation system becomes too generalist. According to Stronge and Tucker (2003) these tools or rating scales are useful in standardising how feedback will be provided. Nevertheless, we deem that the tools to be developed have to be valid, reliable and practical so as to respond to the expectations of the educational system.

- *Adoption of a participative model of development.* For any educational innovation to succeed, and especially for the successful implementation of a novel teacher evaluation system, there is a necessary precondition that the same people who will experience directly the system are actively involved in the development process, are acquainted with the various aspects of it and agree upon its goals and intents (Fullan, 1991; Kyriakides *et al.*, 2006). Thus, the adoption of a participative model is considered to be an important element to the development of the evaluation system (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 1990). In this way, the contingency of a negative reaction against the proposal on the part of the various stakeholder constituencies is minimised. This negative reaction repeatedly characterised every previous effort to develop and implement teacher evaluation systems and condemned these systems to failure. Instead, the collaboration between assesseees and assessors creates a sense of ownership of the whole process (Stronge and Tucker, 2003). Moreover, Duke and Canady (1991) mention, the teacher representatives should participate in the development and modification of the criteria used to evaluate teachers, otherwise it is as if we reject the professional status of the teachers.

4.2 Findings (based on the above mentioned analytical framework) regarding the current state of education evaluation systems in Cyprus

As described in the previous sections, it is evident that the current educational evaluation system of Cyprus is seriously failing to respond to contemporary trends in education. First, it is governed by bureaucratic processes that do not meet evaluation expectations. Principals' reports do not discriminate between teachers and it is shown that frequently principals/headteachers draw on a standard set of descriptors for these reports for all teachers. Moreover, despite the threshold guidelines, the grades awarded by inspectors have a very limited range with all teachers being awarded above 32 points out of 40 and the great majority of teachers being given 35, 36 or 37. This means that age and seniority become the actual discriminants of teacher effectiveness. However, by the time these teachers reach administrative positions they are often already burnt out (Pashiardis, 1998).

In addition, the emphasis on performance measurement has driven out any serious commitment to use the system for professional development and improvement. This places summative evaluation higher in priority than the formative purpose of evaluation. It seems that teacher evaluation is more concerned with promoting those judged to be the most effective (Kyriakides *et al.*, 2006). However, a comprehensive teacher evaluation system should be rooted in the two broad purposes of evaluation since it should be oriented towards both outcomes and improvement. It must be noted though that the dual character of teacher evaluation is practically impossible to be achieved with a single evaluation system since the determination of the evaluation purposes influences the sources of data, the evaluation criteria and the design and administration of the evaluation instruments, as well as the interpretation of their results (Harlen and James, 1997; Black and William, 1998; Kyriakides and Campbell, 2003; Kyriakides *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, it is imperative to establish different mechanisms for formative and summative teacher evaluation as well as whole school evaluation.

However, even in the case of the prevalent summative purpose of evaluation one cannot be sure that an effective evaluation is carried out. This is because the number and length of observations that inspectors conduct (i.e. less than four observations for 40 minutes each, during a school year) are inadequate for making generalisations (Brennan, 1992). Moreover, inspectors do not have a common and known framework for observation and grading, and there is no training for conducting classroom observations, so allegations of bias or invalidity are widespread. Additionally, rather than exclusive reliance on the working process model (e.g., Brophy and Good, 1986), criteria for measuring teacher and school effectiveness should emerge from the various models of educational effectiveness research.

In order to achieve the right balance of the various evaluation approaches as described in previous sections of this paper, it is generally believed that there should be three types/forms of appraisal systems:

- (1) to improve the effectiveness of schools;
- (2) to improve the performance of teachers; and
- (3) to improve the effectiveness of the whole school system.

All of these systems of evaluation are interconnected, and taken as a whole, help us achieve the ultimate goal, which is school improvement and therefore, increased student learning and achievement.

4.3 The new proposed appraisal system for improving school effectiveness or a balance between external and internal processes

4.3.1 General aims of the new proposed appraisal system as a whole. The basic principles of the new proposed appraisal system[2] include the design of action plans for improving school effectiveness. This appraisal system should be holistic so as to take into account the context and particular circumstances of the school being appraised (such as location of the school, the socioeconomic status of students and teachers, experience and education of teachers, etc.). There should also be an extensive use of participative models (i.e. management team, teachers, parents, and students) during the school improvement process as well as a link between the self-evaluation of the school with an external appraisal process. Furthermore, the results of this appraisal should not be used for comparing and ranking of schools, the practice that England has with its league tables and the “Name and Shame” policy.

This proposed appraisal system should aim at identifying needs for improvement in a particular school, setting education policy on the basis of scientific evidence and appraising changes in the education at the macro and micro level. Furthermore, the systemic evaluation of the school will utilise models of educational evaluation in order to determine whether goal setting models and / or education management models will be used. Moreover, the criteria for school evaluation must be accepted by the stakeholders, and they must be in line with relevant international research and evidence. The criteria will be in line with the responsibilities that each teaching personnel is expected to deliver (different for assistant principals, principals, etc.). However, the criteria will be grouped in various relevant areas so that the school is able to create various action plans for improvement.

4.3.2 Differentiation of education appraisal systems

- *An appraisal system for professional development or improvement of the teaching process.* The basic principles of the proposed system are that the professional development of teachers will also be in line with the specific needs of the school and aligned with school inspection, as these will become evident from the evaluation for improving school performance. Furthermore, greater emphasis will be placed on in-service training within the school and on providing a link of the self-appraisal of teachers with the system for professional development. The mechanisms and bodies responsible for this system will differ from those to be used in the system of evaluating performance for promotion purposes. The post of Instructional Leader (IL) will also be introduced for all schools. The IL will be responsible for the organisation and implementation of within-the-school training. Moreover, the IL will inform the teachers on opportunities for external training to meet specific development needs in areas of their interest. The IL is also responsible for collecting all the information on the training needs of the teachers and he/she organises respective professional development programs. The results of the development will be appraised by the IL. They will be confidential and will be made known only to the teacher concerned.

The IL will be a focal point in the development of teachers. He/she will observe teachings of the teachers and will provide the relevant feedback and support. Furthermore, the IL will conduct “model lessons” for schoolteachers to observe. The teacher may ask for a focused observation (i.e. on a specific area, such as classroom climate). The number of observations that an IL will perform for a teacher will be in line with the needs of the teachers of the specific school. In any case, the IL must make at least two observations for every teacher during a school year.

- *Appraisal system for professional support and for granting of permanency of post to newly appointed teachers or external control of the quality of teaching personnel.* The basic principles of this system consist of two types of support, the training within the school and external training. Furthermore, the basic principles of this part of the teacher appraisal system are that: there should be flexibility for the time required in order to grant permanency of post, and that one will be granted permanency of post, only if all set criteria are fulfilled. The body responsible for the appraisal for granting permanency of post will differ from those responsible for supporting newly appointed teachers and will be different from the body responsible for promotions. This part of the teacher appraisal system recommends that in extreme cases no teaching responsibilities should be assigned to teachers. Such cases include knowledge weaknesses in the content area which teachers have and are required to complete a relevant training course. In order for someone to re-enter the education system, he /she must have a certificate to verify knowledge in the specific teaching area. In case of pedagogical weaknesses, teachers are required to complete a relevant training course in the area of pedagogical training. In order for someone to re-enter the education system, he / she must have a certificate to verify pedagogical adequacy.

The basic principles for evaluating newly appointed teachers in order to grant them permanency of post are: the process will ensure that the teachers meet the minimum level of knowledge and skills needed to execute successfully their

duties. For this reason, criterion based evaluation will be used and only the ones who meet the performance indicators for each criterion will be granted permanency of post. Taking into account the differences in the initial training of teachers[3], the system will be flexible with regards to the period of granting permanency of post (two-five years).

The procedure for granting permanency of post will be as follows: two external evaluators and the school principal in which the teacher works observe and evaluate the teaching ability of the teacher. In this context a special instrument has been designed that will be used to evaluate one's teaching ability. The teacher is also responsible to complete and send (in due time) a self-evaluation form and his / her personal portfolio. All records will be collected at the Centre of Educational Research and Appraisal. The centre will analyse and produce the results. The results will be provided to the Educational Service Commission (ESC) and to the interested teacher. The instrument for communicating results will provide the teacher both qualitative and quantitative information. In particular, the profile of the teacher on each scale will be given in addition to recommendation on areas for further improvement. One can notice the mix here between external and internal persons and procedures involved as well as the interplay between formative and summative functions.

- *Appraisal system for the career promotion of teachers or the summative function of evaluation.* The basic principles of this system are multiple sources – at least three different sources of information about the quality of work-output of the teacher, depending on the existing position of the teacher and the targeted promotion position. Furthermore, there should be high discrimination indicators in the evaluators' scores as well as a meta-evaluation of evaluators. The score for the appraisal of each year will be independent from previous ones (the performance of the previous year not to influence that of the next year). There is the need to modify existing schemes of service (job descriptions) on the basis of the responsibilities and qualifications needed for each position. Amongst others, the self-appraisal and the portfolio of a teacher must be taken into account. These will provide evidence of the efforts, and actions taken by the teacher to promote his/her professional work and his/her professional development.

The procedures for promotion to the post of assistant principal of school for administration and management and/or instructional leader, principal and evaluator/inspector are very similar and include the following: two external assessors and the principal of the school at which the teacher serves, monitor and evaluate the teaching ability of the interested teacher. A special instrument has been designed for this purpose. The interested teacher will also be responsible for completing and sending the self-evaluation form as well as his/her portfolio. All the appraisal information will be collected at the Centre of Educational Research and Appraisal. The Centre will notify the ESC on the results of the analysis, the portfolio of teachers and the completed appraisal tools. The ESC will then inform the interested teachers on the results. The form for the notification of results will provide the teacher concerned with both qualitative and quantitative information. Then, a hierarchical ranking list will be compiled and the best on this list will be promoted.

For the promotion to the position of evaluator/inspector, there is a slight difference in the sense that the candidates will be evaluated through an assessment centre. The evaluators at the assessment centre will have as a primary goal the observation and appraisal of the candidates whilst they go through various exercises and simulations that relate to school management and staff appraisal. Examples of these are: analysing and resolving a problem, verbal communication, leadership skills, ability to use staff appraisal techniques. The contents of one's curriculum vitae will also be taken into account. The evaluators from the Centre of Educational and Appraisal complete a detailed report on each candidate and the best will be hired on a three- or five-year contract. If the newly hired evaluators do not perform their duties in an objective and effective way, their contract will not be renewed. As can be observed from the procedures described above, it is again a search for the right mix between external people and processes and internal people and processes as well as a mix between the formative and summative functions of evaluation.

5. Discussion and conclusions: so how do we avoid the clash of the evaluations and how could the missing link between school accountability and school improvement look?

From the descriptions provided in the previous sections, one can detect three major groupings of conditions for the acceptance of the new evaluation systems as well as for their successful implementation from a practical and from a conceptual point of view:

- (1) Conditions of success for the increase of the acceptance of teacher/school evaluation from the point of view of the teachers are that:
 - Schools need more freedom, independence and autonomy, because only in a relatively free organisation actors can be convinced of the necessity and the usefulness of external control. Furthermore, schools need competencies and quality indicators for their own actions. Systems of accountability (such as the school-inspection) only make sense, if success or lack of success of right or wrong actions can be attributed to specific actors, who possess the authority to make decisions.
 - The aims, which the evaluation agency pursues through the evaluation process, are perceived as clear, plausible and fair.
 - The inspectors should possess practical school experience. If the school inspection is given to private inspectorate agencies, as is the case in England, this process of evaluation turns out to be stigmatised from the teachers' point of view and therefore, seriously lacking the necessary validity and reliability for its acceptance.
 - The results of the inspections are relevant to the daily work of teachers (especially to the planning, realisation and interpretation of the teaching processes) and that they should give concrete suggestions for quality improvement.
 - The school-administration (local offices, districts) prove, that they also hold themselves accountable to external evaluations and that they are able (at the same time) to deal in a productive way with uncomfortable and/or not very favourable results.

(2) Conditions of a teacher/school quality optimising evaluation system from a conceptual point of view are that:

- The relationship of external teacher/school evaluation and the self-evaluation are reflected in a concrete way and they are balanced out (in essence, the necessary checks and balances are there). Looking at the system in Switzerland, Strittmatter (2007) characterises the relationship of external and internal evaluation in the following way: “The bigger (in terms of time and emotionally) and the more serious (in terms of possible sanctions) the external evaluation is seen, the less energy can be provided for a serious, professional self-evaluation. External evaluation, perceived as voluminous and threatening leads to the fact that self-evaluation is left out altogether or is done as an alibi in the pre-phase of the external evaluation process (something which is currently practiced in Cyprus extensively under the current evaluation system).
- The self-evaluation which precedes the external evaluation corresponds to qualitative process standards, which are defined and controlled (to a great extent) by the school.
- The teacher/school evaluation is protected from naming-and-shaming effects. As long as sensitive data are unprotected from the public discourse (e.g. forcing schools to publish the results of the inspection in a newspaper in The Netherlands), schools will act in a defensive way. This is especially true, if negative inspection results are connected more or less directly with financial sanctions (see England for example).
- During the evaluation of the school the specific local context of the school (school area, etc.), its school profile and the individual progress (value-added) is taken into consideration.

(3) Conditions of a teacher/school quality optimising evaluation system from a practical point of view are that:

- The evaluation criteria and their corresponding weighting system is transparent. What we basically need are data based on the management of the school that can guide the organisation in a way that the probability for success (quality) can increase. The Handbook of Inspection, provided by the English inspectorate is seen by the English school leaders as a useful instrument for school development.
- Teachers and schools are supported and helped when it comes to the implementation of the inspectorate’s recommendations. Especially very weak schools and teachers can benefit from a very intense tutoring after the evaluation process.
- Teacher/school evaluation is a social process, which needs to be established in the education system in a careful way. The initial hesitating reaction of the Swedish schools and communities to the compulsory element of regular self-evaluation, points out to the necessity to introduce school evaluation processes in small and sensible steps.

In conclusion, under conditions of constant change such as we are experiencing in this decade, we need to find new answers to old problems, mainly problems which deal with teaching, learning and evaluating. The cooperation among all those involved is imperative if we are to navigate into the twenty-first century successfully. This cooperation is especially needed in order to create a new teacher and school appraisal system that will be based on mutual respect between evaluators, teachers and schools. Channels of communication should be both horizontal and vertical. Furthermore, the new system should be based on the belief that teachers are specialists/scientists who have university education and know exactly what is expected of them, thus acting as professionals. A new teacher and school appraisal system should also be based primarily on one of the principles, i.e., that good teachers should remain in the classroom where the system needs them most as opposed to being promoted to unwanted administrative positions.

The positive effects that could accrue as a result of successful implementation of a new teacher appraisal scheme are not limited only to higher salaries for excellent teachers. Another positive result would be the creation of a team of expert teachers who could act as mentors for newcomers in the teaching profession. These mentors would be the excellent teachers who will be promoted but will still remain in the classroom. This could be the beginning of a "buddy-system" where novice teachers will have someone to rely on. Furthermore, in-service and staff-development programs will have greater meaning for those involved since they will be tied to new developmental teacher appraisal processes. The most important result, however, will be higher standards for our students since excellent teachers will remain in the classroom instead of wanting to be promoted to higher administrative positions.

The PAS could also contribute to the transformation of our schools into learning organisations. More weight will be placed on the formative purposes of evaluation while the summative purposes will no longer dominate the evaluation process. It is anticipated that internal evaluation processes such as self-assessment and mentoring will form the basis on which improvement and self-development will be enhanced. External evaluation will no longer drive out internal processes that will now be at the core of the evaluation system. As a result, teaching as well as administrative personnel will have the opportunity to reflect on their practices, learn from their mistakes and achievements and plan their future actions for improvement.

Furthermore, the appraisal instruments which will be used need to go under extensive scrutiny and experimentation before being formally adopted and implemented. A trial period of pilot studies is absolutely needed so that whatever is implemented comes as a result of thorough examination and assessment of initial results, because the quality of teachers and the teaching profession depends on the whole evaluation system. All those involved in the process need to be well educated in teacher appraisal processes as well as in different personnel appraisal schemes. In other words, those involved in the process need to have the necessary knowledge and skills in educational administration and evaluation in order to become an educational leader.

Finally, it needs to be stressed that if we make hasty moves we are bound to make mistakes and even be led to failure. Also, patching up the existing situation will not be of much help to the teaching profession and the educational system in general. More radical solutions need to be found, solutions that are based on the belief that today's

organisations are living and open systems. Above all, we need to change our attitude and our way of thinking about promoting “friends and acquaintances” at the expense of more able teachers; in short, we need to think about nepotism. If meritocracy is not the foundation of a new teacher and school appraisal system, then no system will correct the ills which have been created by the current system in Cyprus. In the final analysis, we must not forget that educational systems are created because there are students who need to learn and not because there are teachers who need to be employed.

Notes

1. In this paper, the terms evaluation and appraisal will be used as synonymous and interchangeably.
2. It should be noted here that the Government of Cyprus appointed a consortium which was formed by academics and a private company (PWC) to develop the new Teacher/School Evaluation System for Cyprus. The consortium was named “Athina” and it was appointed after a rigorous, public competition in 2005. Therefore, any reference to the teacher appraisal systems or school evaluation systems is hypothetical to the extent that these do not constitute official policies of the Government of Cyprus with regards to the Evaluation of its education system, but rather they are propositions put forth by the aforementioned consortium which are currently under discussion between the Ministry of Education and the three main teachers’ unions of the island.
3. When we refer to initial training of teachers we mean both the training that primary school teachers receive as well as the specialised training that secondary school teachers receive. It is customary that primary teachers receive pedagogical/psychological training whereas such training is not usual for secondary teachers who only receive their Bachelor’s degree in their area of specialisation and almost no pedagogical training.

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